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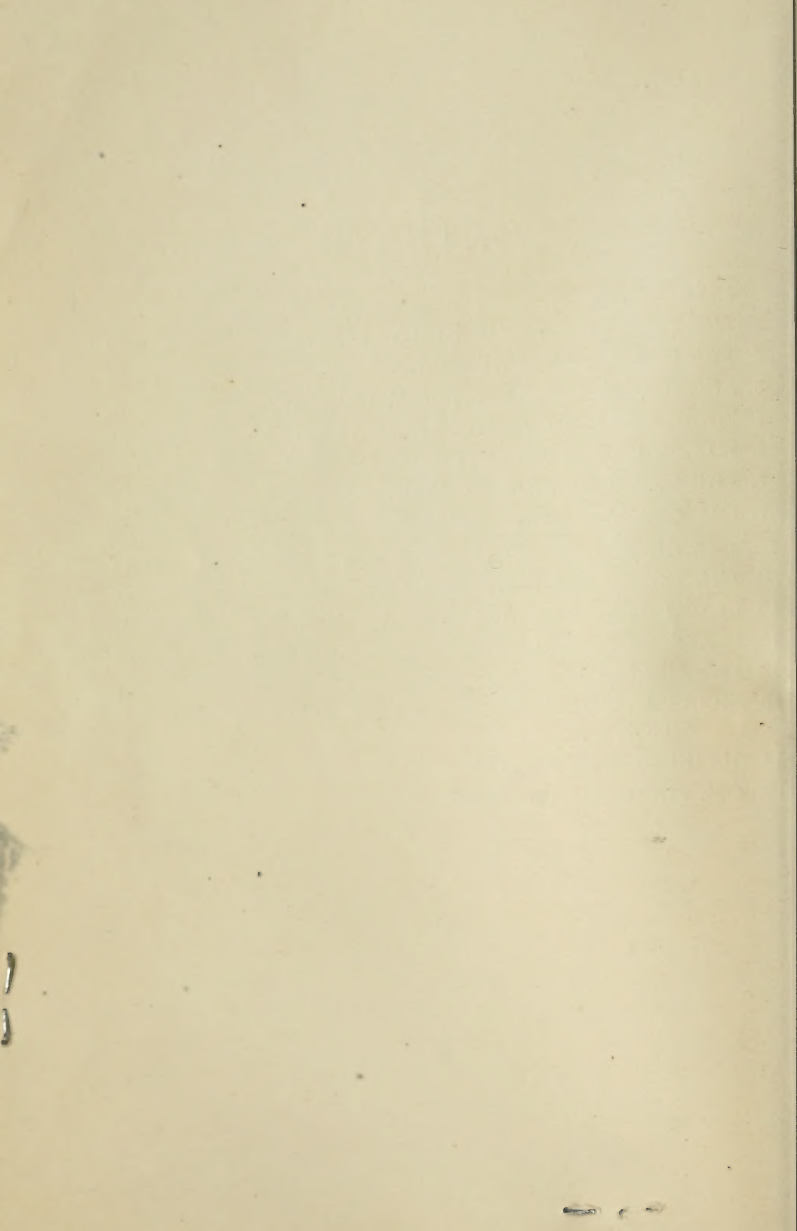
Thucydides, Speeches
" Speeches, selected from
Jowett, introduction by
G. Murray.

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INTRODUCTION

WHEN Thucydides spoke of his history as a *κτῆμα ἐς αἰεί* and not a mere passing entertainment, he probably only meant that it was 'a book to keep', and did not venture to conceive of it as 'an everlasting possession' for the human race. Nevertheless, this is what it really has become, and deserved to become. Centuries of criticism have on the whole confirmed its claim to extreme veracity. But, much more characteristic than this quality, which, after all, is shared by many not very interesting books, is the all-pervading intellectuality of the presentation. Thucydides never obtrudes his person, but on the other hand he never refrains from using his judgement. He is always selecting out of a mass of material the small fragment that he thinks significant; reconstructing the actual states of mind and the political arguments which moved the various communities in his story; analysing the public tendencies of the time, the exact symptoms of the Plague, the results of the strife of classes, and the like. His principles of selection are austere. They are primarily those of a statesman and a soldier. He is only interested in public affairs, and of these he considers military affairs the most important. But they are also the principles of a powerful and rather grimly philosophic intellect, keeping strong emotions rigidly under control. These qualities produce the result that, as he himself says, the book is not amusing or attractive to the casual reader; it is a deep and great book, which lasts and grows, though to the end it remains rather difficult.

He wrote partly in view of 'like events which may be expected to happen hereafter', and, if the time of waiting has been rather long, the somewhat naïvely expressed expectation

has been in a curious degree fulfilled in the recent Great War. Much of the first extract in this book might have been written about our own time. The Peloponnesian War was the greatest war known to Greek memory; it was a world-war; it was a peculiarly shocking war; it was a war between the greatest land power and the greatest sea power, who were also the representatives of military monarchy and of democracy respectively. Geographically again the land power had a central position, while the sea power was scattered; the land power had the economic advantage of being able to produce its own corn on its own soil and depending little if at all on foreigners, while the sea power had what turned out to be the greater advantage still, of getting its food and its raw materials freely from all parts of the Greek world. In all these matters the Peloponnesian Alliance under Sparta resembled the German, while the Athenian Empire was like the British. Indeed the resemblance is sometimes almost fantastic. It is startling for instance to find certain Athenian reprisals justified on the ground that: 'The Spartans had killed and thrown over precipices any merchant sailors of Athens or the Allied Cities whom they caught in trading vessels in the neighbourhood of the Peloponnese. Indeed in the earlier part of the war the Spartans killed every human being whom they caught on the seas, whether allied with Athens or neutral.' (II. 67.)

In other respects the parts are reversed. Sparta, like Great Britain, was the quiet, well-established, easy-going power, content on the whole with its leading position in Greece; Athens was the restless, aggressive, highly educated new-comer, 'never resting herself, and never letting others rest either'. A number of other points of similarity and difference will strike the reader of the following pages. The constant effort of the Peloponnesians to produce rebellions inside the Athenian Empire; the general loyalty of the Athenian colonies contrasted with the constant discontent and unrest of the subject communities;

the good treatment of the Metics (*μέτοικοι*) or Resident Foreigners in Athens and their usefulness during the war; the problem of choosing between a 'patched up peace' with its dangers of renewed trouble, and a 'war to the bitter end' with its possible consequence of indiscriminate ruin to victors and vanquished alike; the comparative objectionableness of 'secret diplomacy', in which the rulers may act against the will of their peoples, and of 'public diplomacy', in which every malevolent busybody is to have full opportunity for mischief; all these are points on which our own experience has repeated the experiences of Athens. And doubtless there are some points, apart from the enormous increase of scale and the infinite superiority of material organization in the modern world, in which the mind of man itself seems either to have advanced, or at least to have taken advantage of its improved conditions. We generally recognize, beyond the duty of patriotism, some duty to the human race as a whole, whereas the patriotism of Pericles, though perhaps higher in mental quality than our average, is purely nationalist. The idea of world-patriotism and the brotherhood of man was not prominent till the rise of the Stoic School, some hundred years later. Similarly, we are trying to end war by means of a League of Nations; the Athenians tried, not indeed to end war altogether, but to end the wars of the 'balance of power' in Greece, by making a firm and frank alliance with their chief enemies. Here our professions at least are higher, and our failure is not likely to be more complete. Again, the perfectly direct and open treason of Alcibiades is something which has no parallel in the modern world. His political enemies drive him into exile; consequently he goes straight to the enemy and fights against his own country in order to be reinstated in it. A modern nation has to be broken in fragments, like Russia, before this sort of conduct becomes at all excusable or indeed possible

It is not surprising, considering the similarity of many of the

essential problems, that the currents of opinion prevalent in Athens—about Sparta we have much less information—remind one often of our own time. These domestic controversies come out more prominently in the contemporary comedies than in the severe history of Thucydides, and I have written about them elsewhere¹.

Before the Peloponnesian War the two great divisions of public feeling in Athens were, as far as we can make out, chiefly determined by two great positive forces, the growing Democracy and the Sophistic culture. The democracy had its faults as well as its virtues, and, while there was no really oligarchical or anti-democratic party, there was a good deal of conservative opposition. The new culture, philosophical and largely sceptical, full of inspiration to some and perhaps of danger to others, antagonized not only the uneducated and the superstitious, but also the votaries of the old-fashioned literary culture. But the war, raising more terrible issues and sharper passions, made a different division—a division, roughly speaking, between the Violent men and the Moderate men. Thus Aristophanes was, on the whole, a conservative and a friend of the old culture; Thucydides a Periclean democrat and a friend of the new culture; Euripides a child of the sophists and an inspired poet; but they all stood together in hatred of Cleon and Hyperbolus and the violent men.

Cleon and Cleon's policy occupy the centre of the stage during the early years of the war. He is the 'most violent of the citizens, and at that time far the most persuasive to the Demos.' He is the main positive force; the other political forces, more moderate, more timid, more conscientious, more intellectual, more high-minded, react against him. They appeal to men's scruples, inhibitions, ideals, second thoughts and

¹ *Aristophanes and the War Party, A Study in the Contemporary Criticism of the Peloponnesian War, Creighton Lecture 1918.* (Allen & Unwin, 1s. 6d.)

feelings of honour. Cleon sweeps forward on the tide of direct passion. He undertakes to win the war and keep the people fed, and every one who stands in his way or scrutinizes his methods is a traitor.

There is much more of Cleon in Aristophanes than in Thucydides, but the two pictures agree and confirm one another. And the speech in Bk. iii. 37 ff., with its tone of scarcely disguised intimidation, is admirably characteristic. The policy he professes is a simple ruthless chauvinism; there is to be no yielding to 'the three deadliest enemies of empire, Pity and Charm of Words and Magnanimity.' It is difficult at first to make out clearly who his opponents are, but a comparison of other passages shows that they consist probably of two classes; the more reputable and old-fashioned statesmen, like Nicias, who know the traditions of decent Hellenic behaviour and object to being stampeded out of them, and secondly the philosophic intellectuals, who loathe Cleon's policy for its ignorance as well as for its wickedness. It is noteworthy that Cleon cannot understand his opponents' point of view; he thinks they are either bribed, or else are frivolously trying to be clever, when they venture to argue against the direct course of war-passion. He does indeed refer to the folly of trying to be too good for this world, just as Pericles did, when attacking the peace-party at the beginning of the war. To Pericles, as to Cleon, the relation of Athens to her subject-allies is despotism; 'she is a Tyrant-City; a position which it may have been wicked to attain, but which cannot without mortal danger be abandoned, if people must have a passion for being virtuous at the expense of the state'! But Pericles seems to feel the tragedy of this confession, and perhaps tried to mitigate it. Cleon apparently has no qualms about it at all.

There are probably many terms in this speech, and elsewhere in Thucydides, which are used in a current political meaning now forgotten. *Apragmosunê* ('indolence') connotes

a policy of non-interference with your neighbours ; the policy of those Athenians who agreed with the Corinthians that the foreign policy of Athens was over-spirited. *Andragathia* ('virtue': 'when virtue is no longer dangerous, you may be as virtuous as you please') connotes the ideal of international justice or of 'carrying the principles of Christianity into foreign politics'. It may be noted that Diodotus, in his answer to Cleon (not contained in this selection) says little on the point of humanity or justice; and argues the case against cruelty purely on utilitarian grounds. Probably this was the safest ground to take in arguing to the Assembly. Certainly in similar cases in modern times the spokesmen for the cause of humanity or mercy almost always take care to repudiate the suggestion that they are moved by sentiment and try merely to prove that the humane policy pays best. Aristophanes in a similar case would appeal to sympathy for the oppressed Allies, as in *The Babylonians*; Plato would appeal to the first principles of Righteousness and denounce the wicked statesman, as in the *Gorgias*.

Cleon's speech is soon followed by a description of the class-war in Corcyra, and the horrible effects on human nature throughout Hellas of the prolonged war and the incessant 'struggle for power' by one side or the other. The atrocities accompanying this social revolution are unfortunately far more intelligible to us now than they were in 1914.

Ancient writers, as compared with modern, are extremely sparing of their moral criticisms. They nearly always relate events without comment, or with a comment that is only implicit and not avowed. And even then they are much more inclined to criticize in terms of wisdom and folly than in those of goodness and wickedness. In his description of the corruption of human nature by the war, however, Thucydides speaks undisguisedly; and I think his feeling is also clear in the long Melian Dialogue. Melos was not an important place,

and its conquest left Athens not perceptibly stronger than she was before. There is no valid reason for devoting thirty chapters to so insignificant a conquest except an inward and spiritual reason. The dialogue between the Athenian commissioners and the Melian Senate is like those dialogues between the Just and the Unjust Word, or between the Worse and the Better Cause, of which we have some examples in Greek literature. The Athenian arguments are quite sound on certain principles of *realpolitik*; they are principles on which all states have at times acted, though some more consciously than others; and the only thing wrong with them is, apparently, a sort of moral insanity. They seem as one ponders them to be a sort of revelation of what wickedness is, 'the negation of God', as Mr. Gladstone phrased it, 'exalted into a system'. And it can hardly be an accident that this long-drawn triumph of conscious iniquity is followed immediately by the story of the Sicilian Expedition and the fall of the Tyrant-City.

I confess that I agree with Mr. F. M. Cornford that Thucydides saw the history of Athens, and constructed his narrative of that history, in the form and mould of a Greek tragedy. It was the manner of his age. The typical form of Jewish history is an infidelity to Jehovah, a divine punishment, a repentance and restoration. The typical form of modern history is given by the biological metaphor of evolution. The typical Greek form was a tragedy; the rise of Pride, its Sin and its Fall. I do not think that Thucydides for a moment violated his facts in order to make them fit this scheme, but I do think he has so arranged his narrative as to suggest this interpretation of the events, or, as some would say, to bring out this truth. And the fact that the sinner whose *Hubris* sins so deeply and earns so terrible a fall is none other than the Shining City, the city so far above all others in courage and hope and freedom, the Princess with the Band of Lovers of whom Thucydides himself

speaks, makes the tragedy all the more characteristic. The splendid heroine satisfies Aristotle's requirement; she has a thousand virtues and just one fault, a fault on the grand scale which is absolutely deadly. She is a Tyrant, and tyrants must needs fall.

A selection is always an unsatisfactory thing. And so is a translation. The present book is of course meant for students who are in some way debarred from reading the full Greek text; but it will be more profitable if read with an eye to the whole of Thucydides and with the guidance or companionship of a Greek scholar, who can supply the clue to obscure passages. Light may also be obtained from Mr. Zimmern's *Greek Commonwealth*, and from such books as Dr. Grundy's *Thucydides*. I may also mention my own study of *Euripides and his Age* in the Home University Library.

Dr. Jowett's famous translation, for the use of which I have to thank the kindness of Balliol College, was of course written in days when our present controversies were unknown and men's minds were occupied with other things. This gives it for our present purpose an advantage and a disadvantage. The language is clear from the suspicion of being in any way 'cooked' or modified so as to suit the interests of the moment, while, on the other hand, it seems in some places to have lost in clarity and exactitude of understanding just because the translator had not lived through the experience of a great war.

G. M.

SPEECHES AND EXTRACTS

1. *The method and purpose of this History; the greatness of the Peloponnesian War.*

THUCYDIDES, an Athenian, wrote the history of the war in I 1 which the Peloponnesians and the Athenians fought against one another. He began to write when they first took up arms, believing that it would be great and memorable above any previous war. For he argued that both states were then at the full height of their military power, and he saw the rest of the Hellenes either siding or intending to side with one or other of them. No movement ever stirred Hellas more deeply than this; it was shared by many of the Barbarians, and might be said even to affect the world at large. . . .

And, though men will always judge any war in which they 21 are actually fighting to be the greatest at the time, but, after it is over, revert to their admiration of some other which has preceded, still the Peloponnesian, if estimated by the actual facts, will certainly prove to have been the greatest ever known.

As to the speeches which were made either before or during 22 the war, it was hard for me, and for others who reported them to me, to recollect the exact words. I have therefore put into the mouth of each speaker the sentiments proper to the occasion, expressed as I thought he would be likely to express them, while at the same time I endeavoured, as nearly as I could, to give the general purport of what was actually said. Of the events of the war I have not ventured to speak from any chance information, nor according to any notion of my own; I have described nothing but what I either saw myself, or learned from others of whom I made the most careful and particular inquiry. The task was a laborious one, because eyewitnesses of the

same occurrences gave different accounts of them, as they remembered or were interested in the actions of one side or the other. And very likely the strictly historical character of my narrative may be disappointing to the ear. But if he who desires to have before his eyes a true picture of the events which have happened, and of the like events which may be expected to happen hereafter in the order of human things, shall pronounce what I have written to be useful, then I shall be satisfied. My history is an everlasting possession, not a prize composition which is heard and forgotten.

23 The greatest achievement of former times was the Persian War; yet even this was speedily decided in two battles by sea and two by land. But the Peloponnesian War was a protracted struggle, and attended by calamities such as Hellas had never known within a like period of time. Never were so many cities captured and depopulated—some by Barbarians, others by Hellenes themselves fighting against one another; and several of them after their capture were re peopled by strangers. Never were exile and slaughter more frequent, whether in war or brought about by civil strife. And traditions which had often been current before, but rarely verified by fact, were now no longer doubted. For there were earthquakes unparalleled in their extent and fury, and eclipses of the sun more numerous than are recorded to have happened in any former age; there were also in some places great droughts causing famines, and lastly the plague which did immense harm and destroyed numbers of people. All these calamities fell upon Hellas simultaneously with the war, which began when the Athenians and Peloponnesians violated the thirty years' truce concluded by them after the recapture of Euboea. Why they broke it and what were the grounds of quarrel I will first set forth, that in time to come no man may be at a loss to know what was the origin of this great war. The real though unavowed cause I believe to have been the growth of the

Athenian power, which terrified the Lacedaemonians and forced them into war; but the reasons publicly alleged on either side were as follows.

2. *Speech of the Corinthians at Sparta, 432 B.C. The Spartans, being themselves unsuspecting, have treated as mere scaremongers all who tried to warn them of the dangerous activity of the Athenians.*

The Corinthians waited until the other allies had stirred up the Lacedaemonians; at length they came forward, and, last of all, spoke as follows:

‘The spirit of trust, Lacedaemonians, which animates your own political and social life, makes you distrust others who, like ourselves, have something unpleasant to say, and this temper of mind, though favourable to moderation, too often leaves you in ignorance of what is going on outside your own country. Time after time we have warned you of the mischief which the Athenians would do to us, but instead of taking our words to heart, you choose to suspect that we only spoke from interested motives. And this is the reason why you have brought the allies to Sparta too late, not before but after the injury has been inflicted, and when they are smarting under the sense of it. If the crimes which the Athenians are committing against Hellas were being done in a corner, then you might be ignorant, and we should have to inform you of them: but now, what need of many words? Some of us, as you see, have been already enslaved; they are at this moment intriguing against others, notably against allies of ours; and long ago they had made all their preparations in the prospect of war. Else why did they seduce from her allegiance Corcyra, which they still hold in defiance of us, and why are they blockading Potidaea, the latter a most advantageous post for the command of the Thracian peninsula, the former a great naval power which might have assisted the Peloponnesians?’

69 'And the blame of all this rests on you ; for you originally allowed them to fortify their city after the Persian War, and afterwards to build their Long Walls ; and to this hour you have gone on defrauding of liberty their unfortunate subjects, and are now beginning to take it away from your own allies. For the true enslaver of a people is he who can put an end to their slavery but has no care about it ; and all the more, if he be reputed the champion of liberty. . . .

70 'And you have never considered what manner of men are these Athenians, with whom you will have to fight, and how utterly unlike yourselves. They are revolutionary,¹ equally quick in the conception and in the execution of every new plan ; while you are conservative—careful only to keep what you have, originating nothing, and not acting even when action is most urgent. They are bold beyond their strength ; they run risks which prudence would condemn ; and in the midst of misfortune they are full of hope. Whereas it is your nature, though strong, to act feebly ; when your plans are most prudent, to distrust them ; and when calamities come upon you, to think that you will never be delivered from them. They are impetuous, and you are dilatory ; they are always abroad, and you are always at home. For they hope to gain something by leaving their homes ; but you are afraid that any new enterprise may imperil what you have already. When conquerors, they pursue their victory to the utmost ; when defeated, they fall back the least. Their bodies they devote to their country as though they belonged to other men ; their true self is their mind, which is most truly their own when employed in her service. When they do not carry out an intention which they have formed, they seem to themselves to have sustained a personal bereavement ; when an enterprise succeeds, they have gained a mere instalment of what is to come ; but if they fail, they at once conceive new hopes and so fill up the void. With

¹ More exactly : 'doers of new things'.

them alone to hope is to have, for they lose not a moment in the execution of an idea. This is the lifelong task, full of danger and toil, which they are always imposing upon themselves. None enjoy their good things less, because they are always seeking for more. To do their duty is their only holiday, and they deem the quiet of inaction to be as disagreeable as the most tiresome business. If a man should say of them, in a word, that they were born neither to have peace themselves nor to allow peace to other men, he would simply speak the truth.

‘In the face of such an enemy, Lacedaemonians, you persist 71
in doing nothing. You do not see that peace is best secured by those who use their strength justly, but whose attitude shows that they have no intention of submitting to wrong. Justice with you seems to consist in giving no annoyance to others and in defending yourselves only against positive injury. But this policy would hardly be successful, even if your neighbours were like yourselves; and in the present case, as we pointed out just now, your ways compared with theirs are old-fashioned. And, as in the arts, so also in politics, the new must always prevail over the old. In settled times the traditions of government should be observed: but when circumstances are changing and men are compelled to meet them, much originality is required. The Athenians have had a wider experience, and therefore the administration of their state, unlike yours, has been greatly reformed. But here let your procrastination end; send an army at once into Attica and assist your allies, especially the Potidaeans, to whom your word is pledged.’

3. *Speech of Archidamus, the Spartan king, against the war.*
‘We are weak in population, in ships, in capital, compared to the Athenians. Let us negotiate and prepare, so as to be ready, if necessary, two years hence. The Athenians have offered arbitration.’

The majority were agreed that there was now a clear case I 79
against the Athenians, and that they must fight at once. But

Archidamus their king, who was held to be both an able and a prudent man, came forward and spoke as follows :

80 'At my age, Lacedaemonians, I have had experience of many wars, and I see several of you who are as old as I am, and who will not, as men too often do, desire war because they have never known it, or in the belief that it is either a good or a safe thing. Any one who calmly reflects will find that the war about which you are now deliberating is likely to be a very great one. When we encounter our neighbours in the Peloponnese, their mode of fighting is like ours, and they are all within a short march. But when we have to do with men whose country is a long way off, and who are most skilful seamen and thoroughly provided with the means of war—having wealth, private and public, ships, horses, infantry, and a population larger than is to be found in any single Hellenic territory, not to speak of the numerous allies who pay them tribute—is this a people against whom we can lightly take up arms or plunge into a contest unprepared? To what do we trust? To our navy? There we are inferior; and to exercise and train ourselves until we are a match for them will take time. To our money? Nay, but in that we are weaker still; we have none in a common treasury, and we are never willing to contribute out of our private means.

81 'Perhaps some one may be encouraged by the superior equipment and numbers of our infantry, which will enable us regularly to invade and ravage their lands. But their empire extends to distant countries, and they will be able to introduce supplies by sea. Or, again, we may try to stir up revolt among their allies. But these are mostly islanders, and we shall have to employ a fleet in their defence, as well as in our own. How then shall we carry on the war? For if we can neither defeat them at sea, nor deprive them of the revenues by which their navy is maintained, we shall get the worst of it. And having gone so far, we shall no longer be able even to make peace

with honour, especially if we are believed to have begun the quarrel. We must not for one moment flatter ourselves that if we do but ravage their country the war will be at an end. Nay, I fear that we shall bequeath it to our children; for the Athenians with their high spirit will never barter their liberty to save their land, or be terrified like novices at the sight of war.

‘Not that I would have you shut your eyes to their designs ⁸² and abstain from unmasking them, or tamely suffer them to injure our allies. But do not take up arms yet. Let us first send and remonstrate with them: we need not let them know positively whether we intend to go to war or not. In the meantime our own preparations may be going forward; we may seek for allies wherever we can find them, whether in Hellas or among the Barbarians, who will supply our deficiencies in ships and money. Those who, like ourselves, are exposed to Athenian intrigue cannot be blamed if in self-defence they seek the aid not of Hellenes only, but of Barbarians. And we must develop our own resources to the utmost. If they listen to our ambassadors, well and good; but, if not, in two or three years’ time we shall be in a stronger position, should we then determine to attack them. Perhaps too when they begin to see that we are getting ready, and that our words are to be interpreted by our actions, they may be more likely to yield; for their fields will still be untouched and their goods undespoiled, and it will be in their power to save them by their decision. Think of their land simply in the light of a hostage, all the more valuable in proportion as it is better cultivated; you should spare it as long as you can, and not by reducing them to despair make their resistance more obstinate. For if we allow ourselves to be stung into premature action by the reproaches of our allies, and waste their country before we are ready, we shall only involve Peloponnesus in more and more difficulty and disgrace. Charges brought by cities or

persons against one another can be satisfactorily arranged ; but when a great confederacy, in order to satisfy private grudges, undertakes a war of which no man can foresee the issue, it is not easy to terminate it with honour. . . .

84 'Do not be ashamed of the slowness and procrastination with which they are so fond of charging you ; if you begin the war in haste, you will end it at your leisure, because you took up arms without sufficient preparation. Remember that we have always been citizens of a free and most illustrious state, and that for us the policy which they condemn may well be the truest good sense and discretion. It is a policy which has saved us from growing insolent in prosperity or giving way under adversity, like other men. We are not stimulated by the allurements of flattery into dangerous courses of which we disapprove ; nor are we goaded by offensive charges into compliance with any man's wishes. Our habits of discipline make us both brave and wise ; brave, because the spirit of loyalty quickens the sense of honour, and the sense of honour inspires courage ; wise, because we are not so highly educated that we have learned to despise the laws, and are too severely trained and of too loyal a spirit to disobey them. . . .

85 'These are principles which our fathers have handed down to us, and we maintain to our lasting benefit. . . . We can afford to wait, when others cannot, because we are strong. And now, send to the Athenians and remonstrate with them about Potidaea first, and also about the other wrongs of which your allies complain. They say that they are willing to have the matter tried ; and against one who offers to submit to justice you must not proceed as against a criminal until his cause has been heard. In the meantime prepare for war.'

4. *Final demands of the Lacedaemonians; Pericles advises the Athenians to repeat their willingness to submit to arbitration, but otherwise make no concession. If war comes, the prospects of Athens are good.*

The Lacedaemonians came again and again, and told the Athenians that they must raise the siege of Potidaea and restore Aegina to independence. Above all, and in the plainest terms, they insisted that if they wanted to avert war, they must rescind the decree which excluded the Megarians from the market of Athens and the harbours in the Athenian dominions. But the Athenians would not listen to them, nor rescind the decree; alleging in reply that the Megarians had tilled the holy ground and the neutral borderland, and had received their runaway slaves. Finally, there came from Sparta an embassy, consisting of Rhamphias, Melesippus, and Hege-sander, who said nothing of all this, but only, 'The Lacedaemonians desire to maintain peace; and peace there may be, if you will restore independence to the Hellenes'. Whereupon the Athenians called an assembly and held a discussion; it seemed best to them to make up their minds and to give a complete and final answer. Many came forward to speak, and much was said on both sides, some affirming that they ought to go to war, and others that this decree about the Megarians should be rescinded and not stand in the way of peace. At last Pericles the son of Xanthippus, who was the first man of his day at Athens, and the greatest orator and statesman, came forward and advised as follows:

'Athenians, I say, as I always have said, that we must never yield to the Peloponnesians, . . . and I call upon those whom my words may convince to maintain our united determination, even if we should not escape disaster; or else, if our sagacity be justified by success, to claim no share of the credit. . . .

'For some time past the designs of the Lacedaemonians have been clear enough, and they are still clearer now. Our

agreement says that when differences arise, the two parties shall refer them to arbitration, and in the meantime both are to retain what they have. . But for arbitration they never ask ; and when it is offered by us, they refuse it. They want to redress their grievances by arms and not by argument ; and now they come to us, using the language, no longer of expostulation, but of command. They tell us to quit Potidaea, to leave Aegina independent, and to rescind the decree respecting the Megarians. These last ambassadors go further still, and announce that we must give the Hellenes independence. I would have none of you imagine that he will be fighting for a small matter if we refuse to annul the Megarian decree, of which they make so much, telling us that its revocation would prevent the war. You should have no lingering uneasiness about this ; you are not really going to war for a trifle. For in the seeming trifle is involved the trial and confirmation of your whole purpose. If you yield to them in a small matter, they will think that you are afraid, and will immediately dictate some more oppressive condition ; but if you are firm, you will
141 prove to them that they must treat you as their equals. Wherefore make up your minds once for all, either to give way while you are still unharmed, or, if we are going to war, as in my judgement is best, then on no plea small or great to give way at all ; we will not condescend to possess our own in fear. Any claim, the smallest as well as the greatest, imposed on a neighbour and an equal when there has been no legal award, can mean nothing but slavery.

‘That our resources are equal to theirs, and that we shall be as strong in the war, I will now prove to you in detail. The Peloponnesians cultivate their own lands, and they have no wealth either public or private. Nor have they any experience of long wars in countries beyond the sea ; their poverty prevents them from fighting, except in person against each other, and that for a short time only. Such men cannot be often

manning fleets or sending out armies. They would be at a distance from their own properties, upon which they must nevertheless draw, and they will be kept off the sea by us. Now wars are supported out of accumulated wealth, and not out of forced contributions. . . . In a single pitched battle the Peloponnesians and their allies are a match for all Hellas, but they are not able to maintain a war against a power different in kind from their own ; they have no regular general assembly, and therefore cannot execute their plans with speed and decision. The confederacy is made up of many races ; all the representatives have equal votes, and press their several interests. There follows the usual result, that nothing is ever done properly. For some are all anxiety to be revenged on an enemy, while others only want to get off with as little loss as possible. The members of such a confederacy are slow to meet, and when they do meet, they give little time to the consideration of any common interest, and a great deal to schemes which further the interest of their particular state. Every one fancies that his own neglect will do no harm, but that it is somebody else's business to keep a look-out for him, and this idea, cherished alike by each, is the secret ruin of all.

‘ Their greatest difficulty will be want of money, which they 142 can only provide slowly ; delay will thus occur, and war waits for no man. Further, no fortified place which they can raise against us is to be feared any more than their navy. . . . Or, if they simply raise a fort in our territory, they may do mischief to some part of our lands by sallies, and the slaves may desert to them ; but that will not prevent us from sailing to the Peloponnese and there raising forts against them, and defending ourselves there by the help of our navy, which is our strong arm. For we have gained more experience of fighting on land from warfare at sea than they of naval affairs from warfare on land. And they will not easily acquire the art of seamanship ; even you yourselves, who have been practising ever since the

Persian War, are not yet perfect. How can they, who are not sailors, but tillers of the soil, do much? They will not even be permitted to practise, because a large fleet will constantly be lying in wait for them. If they were watched by a few ships only, they might run the risk, trusting to their numbers and forgetting their inexperience; but if they are kept off the sea by our superior strength, their want of practice will make them unskilful, and their want of skill timid. Maritime skill is like skill of other kinds, not a thing to be cultivated by the way or at chance times; it is jealous of any other pursuit which distracts the mind for an instant from itself.

143 'Suppose, again, that they lay hands on the treasures at Olympia and Delphi, and tempt our mercenary sailors with the offer of higher pay, there might be serious danger, if we and our metics embarking alone were not still a match for them. But we are a match for them: and, best of all, our pilots are taken from our own citizens, while no sailors are to be found so good or so numerous as ours in all the rest of Hellas. None of our mercenaries will choose to fight on their side for the sake of a few days' high pay, when he will not only be an exile, but will incur greater danger, and will have less hope of victory.

'Such I conceive to be the prospects of the Peloponnesians. But we ourselves are free from the defects which I have noted in them; and we have great advantages. If they attack our country by land, we shall attack theirs by sea; and the devastation, even of part of Peloponnesus, will be a very different thing from that of all Attica. For they, if they want fresh territory, must take it by arms, whereas we have abundance of land both in the islands and on the continent; such is the power which the empire of the sea gives. Reflect, if we were islanders, who would be more invulnerable? Let us imagine that we are, and acting in that spirit let us give up land and houses, but keep a watch over the city and the sea. We

should not under any irritation at the loss of our property give battle to the Peloponnesians, who far outnumber us. If we conquer, we shall have to fight over again with as many more ; and if we fail, besides the defeat, our confederacy, which is our strength, will be lost to us ; for our allies will rise in revolt when we are no longer capable of making war upon them. Mourn not for houses and lands, but for men ; men may gain these, but these will not gain men. If I thought that you would listen to me, I would say to you, "Go yourselves and destroy them, and thereby prove to the Peloponnesians that none of these will move you".

'I have many other reasons for believing that you will 144 conquer, but you must not be extending your empire while you are at war, or run into unnecessary dangers. I am more afraid of our own mistakes than of our enemies' designs. But of all this I will speak again when the time of action comes ; for the present, let us send the ambassadors away, giving them this answer : "That we will not exclude the Megarians from our markets and harbours, if the Lacedaemonians will cease to expel foreigners, whether ourselves or our allies, from Sparta ; for the treaty no more forbids the one than the other. That we will concede independence to the cities, if they were independent when we made the treaty, and as soon as the Lacedaemonians allow their allied states a true independence, not for the interest of Lacedaemon, but everywhere for their own. Also that we are willing to offer arbitration according to the treaty. And that we do not want to begin a war, but intend to defend ourselves if attacked." This answer will be just, and befits the dignity of the city. We must be aware, however, that war will come ; and the more willing we are to accept the situation, the less ready will our enemies be to lay hands upon us. Remember that where dangers are greatest, there the greatest honours are to be won by men and states. Our fathers, when they withstood the Persian, had no such power

as we have ; what little they had they forsook : not by good fortune but by wisdom, and not by power but by courage, they drove the Barbarian away and raised us to our present height of greatness. We must be worthy of them, and resist our enemies to the utmost, that we may hand down our empire unimpaired to posterity.'

5. *Speech of Pericles over those who fell in the first year of the war, 431 B.C. In these chapters Thucydides, writing probably after the fall of Athens in 404 B.C., tries to describe the characteristics and ideals of Athens under Pericles.*

II 35 'Most of those who have spoken here before me have commended the lawgiver who added this oration to our other funeral customs ; it seemed to them a worthy thing that such an honour should be given at their burial to the dead who have fallen on the field of battle. But I should have preferred that, when men's deeds have been brave, they should be honoured in deed only, and with such an honour as this public funeral, which you are now witnessing. Then the reputation of many would not have been imperilled on the eloquence or want of eloquence of one, and their virtues believed or not as he spoke well or ill. For it is difficult to say neither too little nor too much ; and even moderation is apt not to give the impression of truthfulness. The friend of the dead who knows the facts is likely to think that the words of the speaker fall short of his knowledge and of his wishes ; another who is not so well informed, when he hears of anything which surpasses his own powers, will be envious and will suspect exaggeration. Mankind are tolerant of the praises of others so long as each hearer thinks that he can do as well or nearly as well himself, but, when the speaker rises above him, jealousy is aroused and he begins to be incredulous. However, since our ancestors have set the seal of their approval upon the practice, I must obey, and to the utmost of my power shall endeavour to satisfy the wishes and beliefs of all who hear me.

‘I will speak first of our ancestors, for it is right and seemly 36
that now, when we are lamenting the dead, a tribute should be
paid to their memory. There has never been a time when they
did not inhabit this land, which by their valour they have
handed down from generation to generation, and we have
received from them a free state. But if they were worthy
of praise, still more were our fathers, who added to their
inheritance, and after many a struggle transmitted to us
their sons this great empire. And we ourselves assembled
here to-day, who are still most of us in the vigour of life, have
carried the work of improvement further, and have richly
endowed our city with all things, so that she is sufficient for
herself both in peace and war. Of the military exploits by
which our various possessions were acquired, or of the energy
with which we or our fathers drove back the tide of war,
Hellenic or Barbarian, I will not speak ; for the tale would be
long and is familiar to you. But before I praise the dead, I
should like to point out by what principles of action we rose to
power, and under what institutions and through what manner
of life our empire became great. . . .

‘Our form of government does not enter into rivalry with 37
the institutions of others. We do not copy our neighbours,
but are an example to them. It is true that we are called
a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of the
many and not of the few. But while the law secures equal
justice to all alike in their private disputes, the claim of excel-
lence is also recognized ; and when a citizen is in any way
distinguished, he is preferred to the public service, not as
a matter of privilege, but as the reward of merit. Neither is
poverty a bar, but a man may benefit his country whatever be
the obscurity of his condition. There is no exclusiveness in
our public life, and in our private intercourse we are not sus-
picious of one another, nor angry with our neighbour if he
does what he likes ; we do not put on sour looks at him

which, though harmless, are not pleasant. While we are thus unconstrained in our private intercourse, a spirit of reverence pervades our public acts; we are prevented from doing wrong by respect for the authorities and for the laws, having an especial regard to those which are ordained for the protection of the injured as well as to those unwritten laws which bring upon the transgressor of them the reprobation of the general sentiment.

38 'And we have not forgotten to provide for our weary spirits many relaxations from toil; we have regular games and sacrifices throughout the year; our homes are beautiful and elegant; and the delight which we daily feel in all these things helps to banish melancholy. Because of the greatness of our city the fruits of the whole earth flow in upon us; so that we enjoy the goods of other countries as freely as of our own.

39 'Then, again, our military training is in many respects superior to that of our adversaries. Our city is thrown open to the world, and we never expel a foreigner or prevent him from seeing or learning anything of which the secret if revealed to an enemy might profit him. We rely not upon management or trickery, but upon our own hearts and hands. And in the matter of education, whereas they from early youth are always undergoing laborious exercises which are to make them brave, we live at ease, and yet are equally ready to face the perils which they face. . . .

40 'If then we prefer to meet danger with a light heart but without laborious training, and with a courage which is gained by habit and not enforced by law, are we not greatly the gainers? . . . For we are lovers of the beautiful, yet simple in our tastes, and we cultivate the mind without loss of manliness. Wealth we employ, not for talk and ostentation, but when there is a real use for it. To avow poverty with us is no disgrace; the true disgrace is in doing nothing to avoid it. An Athenian citizen does not neglect the state because he takes care of his

own household; and even those of us who are engaged in business have a very fair idea of politics. We alone regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs, not as a harmless, but as a useless character; and if few of us are originators, we are all sound judges of a policy. The great impediment to action is, in our opinion, not discussion, but the want of that knowledge which is gained by discussion preparatory to action. For we have a peculiar power of thinking before we act and of acting too, whereas other men are courageous from ignorance but hesitate upon reflection. And they are surely to be esteemed the bravest spirits who, having the clearest sense both of the pains and pleasures of life, do not on that account shrink from danger. In doing good, again, we are unlike others; we make our friends by conferring, not by receiving favours. . . . We alone do good to our neighbours not upon a calculation of interest, but in the confidence of freedom and in a frank and fearless spirit. To sum up: I say that Athens 41 is the school of Hellas, and that the individual Athenian in his own person seems to have the power of adapting himself to the most varied forms of action with the utmost versatility and grace. This is no passing and idle word, but truth and fact; and the assertion is verified by the position to which these qualities have raised the state. For in the hour of trial Athens alone among her contemporaries is superior to the report of her. No enemy who comes against her is indignant at the reverses which he sustains at the hands of such a city; no subject complains that his masters are unworthy of him. And we shall assuredly not be without witnesses; there are mighty monuments of our power which will make us the wonder of this and of succeeding ages; we shall not need the praises of Homer or of any other panegyrist whose poetry may please for the moment, although his representation of the facts will not bear the light of day. For we have compelled every land and every sea to open a path for our valour, and have every-

where planted eternal memorials of our friendship and of our enmity. Such is the city for whose sake these men nobly fought and died ; they could not bear the thought that she might be taken from them ; and every one of us who survive should gladly toil on her behalf.

42 'I have dwelt upon the greatness of Athens because I want to show you that we are contending for a higher prize than those who enjoy none of these privileges, and to establish by manifest proof the merit of these men whom I am now commemorating. Their loftiest praise has been already spoken. For in magnifying the city I have magnified them, and men like them whose virtues made her glorious. And of how few Hellenes can it be said as of them, that their deeds when weighed in the balance have been found equal to their fame ! Methinks that a death such as theirs has been gives the true measure of a man's worth ; it may be the first revelation of his virtues, but is at any rate their final seal. For even those who come short in other ways may justly plead the valour with which they have fought for their country ; they have blotted out the evil with the good, and have benefited the state more by their public services than they have injured her by their private actions. None of these men were enervated by wealth or hesitated to resign the pleasures of life ; none of them put off the evil day in the hope, natural to poverty, that a man, though poor, may one day become rich. But, deeming that the punishment of their enemies was sweeter than any of these things, and that they could fall in no nobler cause, they determined at the hazard of their lives to be honourably avenged, and to leave the rest. They resigned to hope their unknown chance of happiness ; but in the face of death they resolved to rely upon themselves alone. And when the moment came they were minded to resist and suffer, rather than to fly and save their lives ; they ran away from the word of dishonour, but on the battle-field their feet stood fast, and in an instant, at the height of their

fortune, they passed away from the scene, not of their fear, but of their glory.

‘Such was the end of these men ; they were worthy of 43 Athens, and the living need not desire to have a more heroic spirit, although they may pray for a less fatal issue. The value of such a spirit is not to be expressed in words. Any one can discourse to you for ever about the advantages of a brave defence, which you know already. But instead of listening to him I would have you day by day fix your eyes upon the greatness of Athens, until you become filled with the love of her ;¹ and when you are impressed by the spectacle of her glory, reflect that this empire has been acquired by men who knew their duty and had the courage to do it, who in the hour of conflict had the fear of dishonour always present to them, and who, if ever they failed in an enterprise, would not allow their virtues to be lost to their country, but freely gave their lives to her as the fairest offering which they could present at her feast. The sacrifice which they collectively made was individually repaid to them ; for they received again each one for himself a praise which grows not old, and the noblest of all sepulchres—I speak not of that in which their remains are laid, but of that in which their glory survives, and is proclaimed always and on every fitting occasion both in word and deed. For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men ; not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions in their own country, but in foreign lands there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not on stone but in the hearts of men. Make them your examples, and, esteeming courage to be freedom and freedom to be happiness, do not weigh too nicely the perils of war. The unfortunate who has no hope of a change for the better has less reason to throw away his life than the prosperous who, if he survive, is always liable

¹ Literally : ‘ and become her lovers ’.

to a change for the worse, and to whom any accidental fall makes the most serious difference. To a man of spirit, cowardice and disaster coming together are far more bitter than death striking him unperceived at a time when he is full of courage and animated by the general hope.

44 'Wherefore I do not now commiserate the parents of the dead who stand here; I would rather comfort them. You know that your life has been passed amid manifold vicissitudes; and that they may be deemed fortunate who have gained most honour, whether an honourable death like theirs, or an honourable sorrow like yours, and whose days have been so ordered that the term of their happiness is likewise the term of their life. I know how hard it is to make you feel this, when the good fortune of others will too often remind you of the gladness which once lightened your hearts. And sorrow is felt at the want of those blessings, not which a man never knew, but which were a part of his life before they were taken from him. Some of you are of an age at which they may hope to have other children, and they ought to bear their sorrow better; not only will the children who may hereafter be born make them forget their own lost ones, but the city will be doubly a gainer. She will not be left desolate, and she will be safer. For a man's counsel cannot have equal weight or worth, when he alone has no children to risk in the general danger. To those of you who have passed their prime, I say: 'Congratulate yourselves that you have been happy during the greater part of your days; remember that your life of sorrow will not last long, and be comforted by the glory of those who are gone. For the love of honour alone is ever young, and not riches, as some say, but honour is the delight of men when they are old and useless.'

45 'To you who are the sons and brothers of the departed, I see that the struggle to emulate them will be an arduous one. For all men praise the dead, and, however pre-eminent your

virtue may be, hardly will you be thought, I do not say to equal, but even to approach them. The living have their rivals and detractors, but when a man is out of the way, the honour and goodwill which he receives is unalloyed. And, if I am to speak of womanly virtues to those of you who will henceforth be widows, let me sum them up in one short admonition: To a woman not to show more weakness than is natural to her sex is a great glory, and not to be talked about for good or for evil among men.

‘I have paid the required tribute, in obedience to the law, ⁴⁶ making use of such fitting words as I had. The tribute of deeds has been paid in part; for the dead have been honourably interred, and it remains only that their children should be maintained at the public charge until they are grown up: this is the solid prize with which, as with a garland, Athens crowns her sons living and dead, after a struggle like theirs. For where the rewards of virtue are greatest, there the noblest citizens are enlisted in the service of the state. And now, when you have duly lamented, every one his own dead, you may depart.’

Such was the order of the funeral celebrated in this winter, with the end of which ended the first year of the Peloponnesian War.

6. The Great Plague of Athens. It is treated by Thucydides as a natural phenomenon, not as a divine visitation, and observed with scientific care.

As soon as summer returned, the Peloponnesian army, ^{II 47} comprising as before two-thirds of the force of each confederate state, under the command of the Lacedaemonian king Archidamus, the son of Zeuxidamus, invaded Attica, where they established themselves and ravaged the country. They had not been there many days when the plague broke out at Athens for the first time. A similar disorder is said to have

previously smitten many places, particularly Lemnos, but there is no record of such a pestilence occurring elsewhere, or of so great a destruction of human life. For a while physicians, in ignorance of the nature of the disease, sought to apply remedies; but it was in vain, and they themselves were among the first victims, because they oftenest came into contact with it. No human art was of any avail, and as to supplications in temples, inquiries of oracles, and the like, they were utterly useless, and at last men were overpowered by the calamity and gave them all up.

48 The disease is said to have begun south of Egypt in Aethiopia; thence it descended into Egypt and Libya, and after spreading over the greater part of the Persian empire, suddenly fell upon Athens. It first attacked the inhabitants of the Piraeus, and it was supposed that the Peloponnesians had poisoned the cisterns, no conduits having as yet been made there. It afterwards reached the upper city, and then the mortality became far greater. As to its probable origin or the causes which might or could have produced such a disturbance of nature, every man, whether a physician or not, will give his own opinion. But I shall describe its actual course, and the symptoms by which any one who knows them beforehand may recognize the disorder should it ever reappear. For I was myself attacked, and witnessed the sufferings of others.

49 The season was admitted to have been remarkably free from ordinary sickness; and if anybody was already ill of any other disease, it was absorbed in this. Many who were in perfect health, all in a moment, and without any apparent reason, were seized with violent heats in the head and with redness and inflammation of the eyes. Internally the throat and the tongue were quickly suffused with blood, and the breath became unnatural and fetid. There followed sneezing and hoarseness; in a short time the disorder, accompanied by a violent cough, reached the chest; then fastening lower down, it

would move the stomach and bring on all the vomits of bile to which physicians have ever given names ; and they were very distressing. An ineffectual retching producing violent convulsions attacked most of the sufferers ; some as soon as the previous symptoms had abated, others not until long afterwards.¹ The body externally was not so very hot to the touch, nor yet pale ; it was of a livid colour inclining to red, and breaking out in pustules and ulcers. But the internal fever was intense ; the sufferers could not bear to have on them even the finest linen garment : they insisted on being naked, and there was nothing which they longed for more eagerly than to throw themselves into cold water. And many of those who had no one to look after them actually plunged into the cisterns, for they were tormented by unceasing thirst, which was not in the least assuaged whether they drank little or much. They could not sleep ; a restlessness which was intolerable never left them. While the disease was at its height the body, instead of wasting away, held out amid these sufferings in a marvellous manner, and either they died on the seventh or ninth day, not of weakness, for their strength was not exhausted, but of internal fever, which was the end of most ; or, if they survived, then the disease descended into the bowels and there produced violent ulceration ; severe diarrhoea at the same time set in, and at a later stage caused exhaustion, which finally with few exceptions carried them off. For the disorder which had originally settled in the head passed gradually through the whole body, and, if a person got over the worst, would often seize the extremities and leave its mark, attacking the privy parts and the fingers and the toes ; and some escaped with the loss of these, some with the loss of their eyes. Some again had no sooner recovered than they were seized with a forget-

¹ Or, 'these convulsions in some cases soon abated. in others not until long afterwards.'

fulness of all things and knew neither themselves nor their friends.

- 50 The general character of the malady no words can describe, and the fury with which it fastened upon each sufferer was too much for human nature to endure. There was one circumstance in particular which distinguished it from ordinary diseases. The birds and animals which feed on human flesh, although so many bodies were lying unburied, either never came near them, or died if they touched them. This was proved by a remarkable disappearance of the birds of prey, which were not to be seen either about the bodies or anywhere else; while in the case of the dogs the result was even more obvious, because they live with man.
- 51 Such was the general nature of the disease: I omit many strange peculiarities which characterized individual cases. None of the ordinary sicknesses attacked any one while it lasted, or, if they did, they ended in the plague. Some of the sufferers died from want of care, others equally who were receiving the greatest attention. No single remedy could be deemed a specific; for that which did good to one did harm to another. No constitution was of itself strong enough to resist or weak enough to escape the attacks; the disease carried off all alike and defied every mode of treatment. Most appalling was the despondency which seized upon any one who felt himself sickening; for he instantly abandoned his mind to despair and, instead of holding out, absolutely threw away his chance of life. Appalling too was the rapidity with which men caught the infection; dying like sheep if they attended on one another; and this was the principal cause of mortality. When they were afraid to visit one another, the sufferers died in their solitude, so that many houses were empty because there had been no one left to take care of the sick; or if they ventured they perished, especially those who aspired to heroism. For they went to see their friends without thought

of themselves and were ashamed to leave them, at a time when the very relations of the dying were at last growing weary and ceased even to make lamentations, overwhelmed by the vastness of the calamity. But whatever instances there may have been of such devotion, more often the sick and the dying were tended by the pitying care of those who had recovered, because they knew the course of the disease and were themselves free from apprehension. For no one was ever attacked a second time, or not with a fatal result. All men congratulated them, and they themselves, in the excess of their joy at the moment, had an innocent fancy that they could not die of any other sickness.

The crowding of the people out of the country into the city aggravated the misery; and the newly-arrived suffered most. For, having no houses of their own, but inhabiting in the height of summer stifling huts, the mortality among them was dreadful, and they perished in wild disorder. The dead lay as they had died, one upon another, while others hardly alive wallowed in the streets and crawled about every fountain craving for water. The temples in which they lodged were full of the corpses of those who died in them; for the violence of the calamity was such that men, not knowing where to turn, grew reckless of all law, human and divine. The customs which had hitherto been observed at funerals were universally violated, and they buried their dead each one as best he could. Many, having no proper appliances, because the deaths in their household had been so numerous already, lost all shame in the burial of the dead. When one man had raised a funeral pile, others would come, and throwing on their dead first, set fire to it; or when some other corpse was already burning, before they could be stopped, would throw their own dead upon it and depart.

There were other and worse forms of lawlessness which the plague introduced at Athens. Men who had hitherto

concealed what they took pleasure in, now grew bolder. For, seeing the sudden change,—how the rich died in a moment, and those who had nothing immediately inherited their property,—they reflected that life and riches were alike transitory, and they resolved to enjoy themselves while they could, and to think only of pleasure. Who would be willing to sacrifice himself to the law of honour when he knew not whether he would ever live to be held in honour? The pleasure of the moment and any sort of thing which conduced to it took the place both of honour and of expediency. No fear of Gods or law of man deterred a criminal. Those who saw all perishing alike thought that the worship or neglect of the Gods made no difference. For offences against human law no punishment was to be feared; no one would live long enough to be called to account. Already a far heavier sentence had been passed and was hanging over a man's head; before that fell, why should he not take a little pleasure?

54 Such was the grievous calamity which now afflicted the Athenians; within the walls their people were dying, and without, their country was being ravaged. In their troubles they naturally called to mind a verse which the elder men among them declared to have been current long ago:

‘A Dorian war will come and a plague with it.’

There was a dispute about the precise expression, some saying that *limos*, a famine, and not *loimos*, a plague, was the original word. Nevertheless, as might have been expected, for men's memories reflected their sufferings, the argument in favour of *loimos* prevailed at the time. But if ever in future years another Dorian war arises which happens to be accompanied by a famine, they will probably repeat the verse in the other form. The answer of the oracle to the Lacedaemonians when the God was asked ‘whether they should go to war or not’, and he replied ‘that if they fought with all their might, they would conquer, and that he himself would take their part’, was

not forgotten by those who had heard of it, and they quite imagined that they were witnessing the fulfilment of his words. The disease certainly did set in immediately after the invasion of the Peloponnesians, and did not spread into Peloponnesus in any degree worth speaking of, while Athens felt its ravages most severely, and next to Athens the places which were most populous. Such was the history of the plague.

7. *Character of Pericles; his right judgement about the war: his free leadership of the people.*

During the peace, while he was at the head of affairs, he ruled with prudence; under his guidance Athens was safe, and reached the height of her greatness in his time. When the war began he showed that here too he had formed a true estimate of the Athenian power. He survived the commencement of hostilities two years and six months; and, after his death, his foresight was even better appreciated than during his life. For he had told the Athenians that if they would be patient and would attend to their navy, and not seek to enlarge their dominion while the war was going on, nor imperil the existence of the city, they would be victorious; but they did all that he told them not to do, and in matters which seemingly had nothing to do with the war, from motives of private ambition and private interest they adopted a policy which had disastrous effects in respect both of themselves and of their allies; their measures, had they been successful, would only have brought honour and profit to individuals, and, when unsuccessful, crippled the city in the conduct of the war. The reason of the difference was that he, deriving authority from his capacity and acknowledged worth, being also a man of transparent integrity, was able to control the multitude in a free spirit; he led them rather than was led by them; for, not seeking power by dishonest arts, he had no need to say pleasant things, but, on the strength of his own high character,

could venture to oppose and even to anger them. When he saw them unseasonably elated and arrogant, his words humbled and awed them; and, when they were depressed by groundless fears, he sought to reanimate their confidence. Thus Athens, though still in name a democracy, was in fact ruled by her greatest citizen. But his successors were more on an equality with one another, and, each one struggling to be first himself, they were ready to sacrifice the whole conduct of affairs to the whims of the people. Such weakness in a great and imperial city led to many errors, of which the greatest was the Sicilian expedition; not that the Athenians miscalculated their enemy's power, but they themselves, instead of consulting for the interests of the expedition which they had sent out, were occupied in intriguing against one another for the leadership of the democracy, and not only hampered the operations of the army, but became embroiled, for the first time, at home. And yet after they had lost in the Sicilian expedition the greater part of their fleet and army, and were now distracted by revolution, still they held out three years not only against their former enemies, but against the Sicilians who had combined with them, and against most of their own allies who had risen in revolt. Even when Cyrus, the son of the king, joined in the war and supplied the Peloponnesian fleet with money, they continued to resist, and were at last overthrown, not by their enemies, but by themselves and their own internal dissensions. So that at the time Pericles was more than justified in the conviction at which his foresight had arrived, that the Athenians would win an easy victory over the unaided forces of the Peloponnesians.

8. The oligarchical party in Mitylene organize a revolt from Athens. After a long siege they are conquered, and Cleon carries a motion in the Assembly for putting to death the whole male population. The moderates manage to get the matter reconsidered

next day, when Cleon defends his policy and bitterly attacks the 'intellectuals' and idealists, who oppose him. Cleon was defeated after a close vote.

An assembly was again summoned, and different opinions III 36 were expressed by different speakers. In the former assembly, Cleon, the son of Cleaenetus, had carried the decree condemning the Mytilenaeans to death. He was the most violent of the citizens, and at that time exercised by far the greatest influence over the people. And now he came forward a second time and spoke as follows :

‘I have remarked again and again that a democracy cannot 37 manage an empire, but never more than now, when I see you regretting your condemnation of the Mytilenaeans. Having no fear or suspicion of one another in daily life, you deal with your allies upon the same principle, and you do not consider that whenever you yield to them out of pity or are misled by their specious tales, you are guilty of a weakness dangerous to yourselves, and receive no thanks from them. You should remember that your empire is a despotism exercised over unwilling subjects, who are always conspiring against you ; they do not obey in return for any kindness which you do them to your own injury, but in so far as you are their masters ; they have no love of you, but they are held down by force. Besides, what can be more detestable than to be perpetually changing our minds ? We forget that a state in which the laws, though imperfect, are inviolable, is better off than one in which the laws are good but ineffective. Dullness and modesty are a more useful combination than cleverness and licence ; and the more simple sort generally make better citizens than the more astute. For the latter desire to be thought wiser than the laws ; they want to be always getting their own way in public discussions ; they think that they can nowhere have a finer opportunity of displaying their intelligence, and their folly generally ends in the ruin of their country. . . .

38 'I myself think as I did before, and I wonder at those who have brought forward the case of the Mytilenaeans again, thus interposing a delay which is in the interest of the evil-doer. For after a time the anger of the sufferer waxes dull, and he pursues the offender with less keenness; but the vengeance which follows closest upon the wrong is most adequate to it and exacts the fullest retribution. And again I wonder who will answer me, and whether he will attempt to show that the crimes of the Mytilenaeans are a benefit to us, or that when we suffer, our allies suffer with us. Clearly he must be some one who has such confidence in his powers of speech as to contend that you never adopted what was most certainly your resolution; or else he must be some one who, under the inspiration of a bribe, elaborates a sophistical speech in the hope of diverting you from the point. In such rhetorical contests the city gives away the prizes to others, while she takes the risk upon herself. And you are to blame, for you order these contests amiss. When speeches are to be heard, you are too fond of using your eyes, but where actions are concerned you trust your ears; you estimate the possibility of future enterprises from the eloquence of an orator, but as to accomplished facts, instead of accepting ocular demonstration, you believe only what ingenious critics tell you. No men are better dupes, sooner deceived by novel notions, or slower to follow approved advice. You despise what is familiar, while you are worshippers of every new extravagance. Not a man of you but would be an orator if he could; when he cannot, he will not yield the palm to a more successful rival: he would fain show that he does not let his wits come limping after, but that he can praise a sharp remark before it is well out of another's mouth; he would like to be as quick in anticipating what is said, as he is slow in foreseeing its consequences. You are always hankering after an ideal state, but you do not give your minds even to what is straight before you. In

a word, you are at the mercy of your own ears, and sit like spectators attending a performance of sophists, but very unlike counsellors of a state.

‘I want you to put aside this trifling, and therefore I say to you that no single city has ever injured us so deeply as Mytilene. I can excuse those who find our rule too heavy to bear, or who have revolted because the enemy has compelled them. But islanders who had walls, and were unassailable by our enemies, except at sea, and on that element were sufficiently protected by a fleet of their own, who were independent and treated by us with the highest regard, when they act thus, they have not revolted (that word would imply that they were oppressed), but they have rebelled, and entering the ranks of our bitterest enemies have conspired with them to seek our ruin. . . . No sooner did they seem likely to win than they set upon us, although we were doing them no wrong. . . . We should from the first have made no difference between the Mytilenaeans and the rest of our allies, and then their insolence would never have risen to such a height; for men naturally despise those who court them, but respect those who do not give way to them. Yet it is not too late to punish them as their crimes deserve. And do not absolve the people while you throw the blame upon the nobles. For they were all of one mind when we were to be attacked. Had the people deserted the nobles and come over to us, they might at this moment have been reinstated in their city; but they considered that their safety lay in sharing the dangers of the oligarchy, and therefore they joined in the revolt. Reflect: if you impose the same penalty upon those of your allies who wilfully rebel and upon those who are constrained by the enemy, which of them will not revolt upon any pretext however trivial, seeing that, if he succeed, he will be free, and, if he fail, no irreparable evil will follow? We in the meantime shall have to risk our lives and our fortunes against every one in turn. When conquerors

we shall recover only a ruined city, and, for the future, the revenues which are our strength will be lost to us. But if we fail, the number of our adversaries will be increased. And when we ought to be employed in repelling the enemies with whom we have to do, we shall be wasting time in fighting against our own allies.

40 Do not then hold out a hope, which eloquence can secure or money buy, that they are to be excused and that their error is to be deemed human and venial. Their attack was not unpremeditated; that might have been an excuse for them; but they knew what they were doing. This was my original contention, and I still maintain that you should abide by your former decision, and not be misled either by pity, or by the charm of words, or by a too forgiving temper. There are no three things more prejudicial to your power. Mercy should be reserved for the merciful, and not thrown away upon those who will have no compassion on us, and who must by the force of circumstances always be our enemies. And our charming orators will still have an arena, but one in which the questions at stake will not be grave, and the city will not pay so dearly for her brief pleasure in listening to them, while they for a good speech get a good fee. Lastly, forgiveness is naturally shown to those who, being reconciled, will continue friends, and not to those who will always remain what they were, and will abate nothing of their enmity. In one word, if you do as I say, you will do what is just to the Mytilenaeans, and also what is expedient for yourselves; but, if you take the opposite course, they will not be grateful to you, and you will be self-condemned. For, if they were right in revolting, you must be wrong in maintaining your empire. But if, right or wrong, you are resolved to rule, then, rightly or wrongly, they must be chastised for your good. Otherwise you must give up your empire, and, when virtue is no longer dangerous, you may be as virtuous as you please. Punish them as they would have punished you; . . .

recall as vividly as you can what you felt at the time : think how you would have given the world to crush your enemies, and now take your revenge. Do not be soft-hearted at the sight of their distress, but remember the danger which was once hanging over your heads. Chastise them as they deserve, and prove by an example to your other allies that rebellion will be punished with death. If this is made quite clear to them, your attention will no longer be diverted from your enemies by wars against your own allies.'

9. *The prolonged embitterment of the war leads to bloody social revolutions in Corcyra and elsewhere ; corruption of human nature and perversion of moral ideals resulting from the long strain of war.*

When the Corcyraeans perceived that the Athenian fleet was III 81 approaching, while that of the enemy had disappeared, they took the Messenian troops, who had hitherto been outside the walls, into the city, and ordered the ships which they had manned to sail round into the Hyllaic harbour. These proceeded on their way. Meanwhile they killed any of their enemies whom they caught in the city. On the arrival of the ships they disembarked those whom they had induced to go on board and dispatched them ; they also went to the temple of Herè, and persuading about fifty of the suppliants to stand their trial condemned them all to death. The majority would not come out, and, when they saw what was going on, destroyed one another in the enclosure of the temple where they were, except a few who hung themselves on trees, or put an end to their own lives in any other way which they could. And, during the seven days which Eurymedon after his arrival remained with his sixty ships, the Corcyraeans continued slaughtering those of their fellow citizens whom they deemed their enemies ; they professed to punish them for their designs against the democracy, but in fact some were killed from motives of personal enmity, and some because money was owing

to them, by the hands of their debtors. Every form of death was to be seen; and everything, and more than everything, that commonly happens in revolutions, happened then. The father slew the son, and the suppliants were torn from the temples and slain near them; some of them were even walled up in the temple of Dionysus, and there perished. To such extremes of cruelty did revolution go; and this seemed to be the worst of revolutions, because it was the first.

82 For not long afterwards nearly the whole Hellenic world was in commotion; in every city the chiefs of the democracy and of the oligarchy were struggling, the one to bring in the Athenians, the other the Lacedaemonians. Now in time of peace, men would have had no excuse for introducing either, and no desire to do so; but, when they were at war, the introduction of a foreign alliance on one side or the other to the hurt of their enemies and the advantage of themselves was easily effected by the dissatisfied party. And revolution brought upon the cities of Hellas many terrible calamities, such as have been and always will be while human nature remains the same, but which are more or less aggravated and differ in character with every new combination of circumstances. In peace and prosperity both states and individuals are actuated by higher motives, because they do not fall under the dominion of imperious necessities; but war, which takes away the comfortable provision of daily life, is a hard master¹ and tends to assimilate men's characters to their conditions.

When troubles had once begun in the cities, those who followed carried the revolutionary spirit farther and farther, and determined to outdo the report of all who had preceded them by the ingenuity of their enterprises and the atrocity of their revenges. The meaning of words had no longer the same relation to things, but was changed by them as they thought proper. Reckless daring was held to be loyal courage; prudent delay

¹ More correctly 'a violent teacher'.

was the excuse of a coward ; moderation was the disguise of unmanly weakness ; to know everything was to do nothing. Frantic energy was the true quality of a man. A conspirator who wanted to be safe was a recreant in disguise. The lover of violence was always trusted, and his opponent suspected. He who succeeded in a plot was deemed knowing, but a still greater master in craft was he who detected one. On the other hand, he who plotted from the first to have nothing to do with plots was a breaker up of parties and a poltroon who was afraid of the enemy. In a word, he who could outstrip another in a bad action was applauded, and so was he who encouraged to evil one who had no idea of it. The tie of party was stronger than the tie of blood, because a partisan was more ready to dare without asking why. . . . The seal of good faith was not divine law, but fellowship in crime. If an enemy when he was in the ascendant offered fair words, the opposite party received them not in a generous spirit, but by jealous watchfulness of his actions. Revenge was dearer than self-preservation. Any agreements sworn to by either party, when they could do nothing else, were binding as long as both were powerless. But he who on a favourable opportunity first took courage, and struck at his enemy when he saw him off his guard, had greater pleasure in a perfidious than he would have had in an open act of revenge ; he congratulated himself that he had taken the safer course, and also that he had overreached his enemy and gained the prize of superior ability. In general the dishonest more easily gain credit for cleverness than the simple for goodness ; men take a pride in the one, but are ashamed of the other.

The cause of all these evils was the love of power,¹ originating in avarice and ambition, and the party-spirit which is engendered by them when men are fairly embarked in a contest. For the leaders on either side used specious names, the one party professing to uphold the constitutional equality of

¹ Or perhaps 'the pursuit of empire'.

the many, the other the wisdom of an aristocracy, while they made the public interests, to which in name they were devoted, in reality their prize. Striving in every way to overcome each other, they committed the most monstrous crimes; yet even these were surpassed by the magnitude of their revenges, which they pursued to the very utmost, neither party observing any definite limits either of justice or public expediency, but both alike making the caprice of the moment their law. Either by the help of an unrighteous sentence, or grasping power with the strong hand, they were eager to satiate the impatience of party-spirit. Neither faction cared for religion; but any fair pretence which succeeded in effecting some odious purpose was greatly lauded. And the citizens who were of neither party fell a prey to both; either they were disliked because they held aloof, or men were jealous of their surviving.

83 Thus revolution gave birth to every form of wickedness in Hellas. The simplicity which is so large an element in a noble nature was laughed to scorn and disappeared. An attitude of perfidious antagonism everywhere prevailed; for there was no word binding enough, nor oath terrible enough, to reconcile enemies. Each man was strong only in the conviction that nothing was secure; he must look to his own safety, and could not afford to trust others. Inferior intellects generally succeeded best. For, aware of their own deficiencies, and fearing the capacity of their opponents, for whom they were no match in powers of speech, and whose subtle wits were likely to anticipate them in contriving evil, they struck boldly and at once. But the cleverer sort, presuming in their arrogance that they would be aware in time, and disdain to act when they could think, were taken off their guard and easily destroyed.

84 Now in Coreyra most of these deeds were perpetrated, and for the first time. There was every crime which men could commit in revenge who had been governed not wisely, but

tyrannically, and now had the oppressor at their mercy. There were the dishonest designs of others who were longing to be relieved from their habitual poverty, and were naturally animated by a passionate desire for their neighbour's goods; and there were crimes of another class which men commit, not from covetousness, but from the enmity which equals foster towards one another until they are carried away by their blind rage into the extremes of pitiless cruelty. At such a time the life of the city was all in disorder, and human nature, which is always ready to transgress the laws, having now trampled them under foot, delighted to show that her passions were ungovernable, that she was stronger than justice, and the enemy of everything above her. If malignity had not exercised a fatal power, how could any one have preferred revenge to piety, and gain to innocence? But, when men are retaliating upon others, they are reckless of the future, and do not hesitate to annul those common laws of humanity to which every individual trusts for his own hope of deliverance should he ever be overtaken by calamity; they forget that in their own hour of need they will look for them in vain.

10. *Peace offers of the Lacedaemonians in 425 B.C.; Cleon makes peace impossible by insisting that all negotiations shall be conducted in public before the Assembly.*

'Men of Athens, the Lacedaemonians have sent us to IV 17
negotiate for the recovery of our countrymen in the island, in the hope that you may be induced to grant us terms such as will be at once advantageous to you and not inglorious to us in our present misfortune. If we speak at length, this will be no departure from the custom of our country. On the contrary, it is our manner not to say much where few words will suffice, but to be more liberal of speech when something important has to be said and words are the ministers of action. . . .

- 18 'Look only at the calamity which has just overtaken us, who formerly enjoyed the greatest prestige of any Hellenic state, but are now come hither to ask of you the boon which at one time we should have thought ourselves better able to confer. You cannot attribute our mishap to any want of power ; nor to the pride which an increase of power fosters. We were neither stronger nor weaker than before, but we erred in judgement, and to such errors all men are liable. Therefore you should not suppose that, because your city and your empire are powerful at this moment, you will always have fortune on your side. The wise ensure their own safety by not making too sure of their gains, and when disasters come they can meet them more intelligently ; they know that war will go on its way whithersoever chance may lead, and will not restrict itself to the limits which he who begins to meddle with it would fain prescribe. They of all men will be least likely to meet with reverses, because they are not puffed up with military success, and they will be most inclined to end the struggle in the hour of victory. It will be for your honour, Athenians, to act thus towards us. And then the victories which you have gained already cannot be attributed to mere luck ; as they certainly will be if, rejecting our prayer, you should hereafter encounter disasters, a thing which is not unlikely to happen. Whereas you may, if you will, leave to posterity a reputation for power and wisdom which no danger can affect.
- 19 'The Lacedaemonians invite you to make terms with them and to finish the war. They offer peace and alliance and a general friendly and happy relation, and they ask in return their countrymen who are cut off in the island. They think it better that neither city should run any further risk, you of the escape of the besieged, who may find some means of forcing their way out, we of their being compelled to surrender and passing absolutely into your hands. We think that great enmities are most effectually reconciled, not when one party

seeks revenge and, getting a decided superiority, binds his adversary by enforced oaths and makes a treaty with him on unequal terms, but when, having it in his power to do all this, he from a generous and equitable feeling overcomes his resentment, and by the moderation of his terms surprises his adversary, who, having suffered no violence at his hands, is bound to recompense his generosity not with evil but with good, and who therefore, from a sense of honour, is more likely to keep his word. And mankind are more ready to make such a concession to their greater enemies than to those with whom they have only a slight difference. Again, they joyfully give way to those who first give way themselves, although against overbearing power they will risk a conflict even contrary to their own better judgement.

‘Now, if ever, is the time of reconciliation for us both, ²⁰ before either has suffered any irremediable calamity, which must cause, besides the ordinary antagonism of contending states, a personal and inveterate hatred, and will deprive you of the advantages which we now offer. While the contest is still undecided, while you may acquire reputation and our friendship, and while our disaster can be repaired on tolerable terms, and disgrace averted, let us be reconciled, and choosing peace instead of war ourselves, let us give relief and rest to all the Hellenes. The chief credit of the peace will be yours. Whether we or you drove them into war is uncertain; but to give them peace lies with you, and to you they will be grateful. If you decide for peace, you may assure to yourselves the lasting friendship of the Lacedaemonians freely offered by them, you on your part employing no force but kindness only. Consider the great advantages which such a friendship will yield. If you and we are at one, you may be certain that the rest of Hellas, which is less powerful than we, will pay to both of us the greatest deference.’

Thus spoke the Lacedaemonians, thinking that the Athenians, ²¹

who had formerly been desirous of making terms with them, and had only been prevented by their refusal, would now, when peace was offered to them, joyfully agree and would restore their men. But the Athenians reflected that, since they had the Lacedaemonians shut up in the island, it was at any time in their power to make peace, and they wanted more. These feelings were chiefly encouraged by Cleon, the son of Cleaenetus, a popular leader of the day who had the greatest influence over the multitude. He persuaded them to reply that the men in the island must first of all give up themselves and their arms and be sent to Athens; the Lacedaemonians were then to restore Nisaea, Pegae, Troezen, and Achaia—places which had not been taken in war, but had been surrendered under a former treaty in a time of reverse, when the Athenians were more anxious to obtain peace than they now were. On these conditions they might recover the men and make a treaty of such duration as both parties should approve.

22 To this reply the Lacedaemonians said nothing, but only requested that the Athenians would appoint commissioners to discuss with them the details of the agreement and quietly arrive at an understanding about them if they could. This proposal was assailed by Cleon in unmeasured language: he had always known, he said, that they meant no good, and now their designs were unveiled; for they were unwilling to speak a word before the people, but wanted to be closeted with a select few; if they had any honesty in them, let them say what they wanted to the whole city. But the Lacedaemonians knew that, although they might be willing to make concessions under the pressure of their calamities, they could not speak openly before the assembly (for if they spoke and did not succeed, the terms which they offered might injure them in the opinion of their allies); they saw, too, that the Athenians would not grant what was asked of them on any tolerable conditions. So, after a fruitless negotiation, they returned home.

11. *After the deaths of Cleon and Brasidas, the leaders of the war-party on both sides, peace is made between Athens and Sparta in 421 B.C. But it is not honestly kept and war breaks out again.*

The treaty and the alliance which terminated the ten years' war were made in the Ephorate of Pleistolas at Lacedaemon, and the Archonship of Alcaeus at Athens. Those who accepted the treaty were now at peace; but the Corinthians and several of the Peloponnesian cities did what they could to disturb the arrangement. And so before long a new cause of quarrel set the allies against the Lacedaemonians; who also, as time went on, incurred the suspicion of the Athenians, because in certain particulars they would not execute the provisions of the treaty. For six years and ten months the two powers abstained from invading each other's territories, but abroad the cessation of arms was intermittent, and they did each other all the harm which they could. At last they were absolutely compelled to break the treaty made at the end of the first ten years, and engaged once more in open war. V 25

The same Thucydides of Athens continued the history, following the order of events, which he reckoned by summers and winters, up to the destruction of the Athenian empire and the taking of Piraeus and the Long Walls by the Lacedaemonians and their allies. Altogether the war lasted twenty-seven years, for if any one argue that the interval during which the truce continued should be excluded, he is mistaken. . . . This was the solitary instance in which those who put their faith in oracles were justified by the event. For I well remember how, from the beginning to the end of the war, there was a common and often-repeated saying that it was to last thrice nine years. I lived through the whole of it, being of mature years and judgement, and I took great pains to make out the exact truth. For twenty years I was banished from my country after I held the command at Amphipolis, and associating with both sides, with the Peloponnesians quite as much as with the Athenians, 26

because of my exile, I was thus enabled to watch quietly the course of events. I will now proceed to narrate the quarrels which after the first ten years broke up the treaty, and the events of the war which followed.

12. *A small incident of the war is treated at great length by Thucydides because of its moral importance. A discussion between certain Athenian commissioners and the Senate of the small neutral island of Melos, which the Athenians propose either to accept peacefully as a subject or utterly to destroy. 416 B.C.*

V 84 The Athenians next made an expedition against the island of Melos with thirty ships of their own, six Chian, and two Lesbian, twelve hundred hoplites and three hundred archers, besides twenty mounted archers of their own and about fifteen hundred hoplites furnished by their allies in the islands. The Melians are colonists of the Lacedaemonians who would not submit to Athens like the other islanders. At first they were neutral and took no part. But when the Athenians tried to coerce them by ravaging their lands, they were driven into open hostilities. The generals, Cleomedes the son of Lycomedes and Tisias the son of Tisimachus, encamped with the Athenian forces on the island. But before they did the country any harm they sent envoys to negotiate with the Melians. Instead of bringing these envoys before the people, the Melians desired them to explain their errand to the magistrates and to the dominant class. They spoke as follows :

85 'Since we are not allowed to speak to the people, lest, forsooth, a multitude should be deceived by seductive and unexamined arguments which they would hear set forth in a single uninterrupted oration (for we are perfectly aware that this is what you mean in bringing us before a select few), you who are sitting here may as well make assurance yet surer. Let us have no set speeches at all, but do you reply to each

several statement of which you disapprove, and criticize it at once. Say first of all how you like this mode of proceeding.'

The Melian representatives answered: 'The quiet inter- 86
change of explanations is a reasonable thing, and we do not object to that. But your warlike movements, which are present not only to our fears but to our eyes, seem to belie your words. We see that, although you may reason with us, you mean to be our judges; and that at the end of the discussion, if the justice of our cause prevail and we therefore refuse to yield, we may expect war; if we are convinced by you, slavery.'

Ath. 'Nay, but if you are only going to argue from fancies 87
about the future, or if you meet us with any other purpose than that of looking your circumstances in the face and saving your city, we have done; but if this is your intention we will proceed.'

Mel. 'It is an excusable and natural thing that men in our 88
position should neglect no argument and no view which may avail. But we admit that this conference has met to consider the question of our preservation;¹ and therefore let the argument proceed in the manner which you propose.'

Ath. 'Well, then, we Athenians will use no fine words; we 89
will not go out of our way to prove at length that we have a right to rule, because we overthrew the Persians; or that we attack you now because we are suffering any injury at your hands. We should not convince you if we did; nor must you expect to convince us by arguing that, although a colony of the Lacedaemonians, you have taken no part in their expeditions, or that you have never done us any wrong. But you and we should say what we really think, and aim only at what is possible, for we both alike know that into the discussion of human affairs the question of justice only enters where there is equal power to enforce it, and that the powerful exact what they can, and the weak grant what they must.'

¹ Perhaps 'life or death'.

90 *Mel.* 'Well, then, since you set aside justice and invite us to speak of expediency, in our judgement it is certainly expedient that you should respect a principle which is for the common good ; that to every man when in peril a reasonable claim should be accounted a claim of right, and that any plea which he is disposed to urge, even if failing of the point a little, should help his cause. Your interest in this principle is quite as great as ours, inasmuch as you, if you fall, will incur the heaviest vengeance, and will be the most terrible example to mankind.'

91 *Ath.* 'The fall of our empire, if it should fall, is not an event to which we look forward with dismay ; for ruling states such as Lacedaemon are not cruel to their vanquished enemies. With the Lacedaemonians, however, we are not now contending ; the real danger is from our many subject states, who may of their own motion rise up and overcome their masters. But this is a danger which you may leave to us. And we will now endeavour to show that we have come in the interests of our empire, and that in what we are about to say we are only seeking the preservation of your city. For we want to make you ours with the least trouble to ourselves, and it is for the interests of us both that you should not be destroyed.'

92 *Mel.* 'It may be your interest to be our masters, but how can it be ours to be your slaves?'

93 *Ath.* 'To you the gain will be that by submission you will avert the worst ; and we shall be all the richer for your preservation.'

94 *Mel.* 'But must we be your enemies ? Will you not receive us as friends if we are neutral and remain at peace with you ?'

95 *Ath.* 'No, your enmity is not half so mischievous to us as your friendship ; for the one is in the eyes of our subjects an argument of our power, the other of our weakness.'

96 *Mel.* 'But are your subjects really unable to distinguish between states in which you have no concern, and those which

are chiefly your own colonies, and in some cases have revolted and been subdued by you?’

Ath. ‘Why, they do not doubt that both of them have 97 a good deal to say for themselves on the score of justice, but they think that states like yours are left free because they are able to defend themselves, and that we do not attack them because we dare not. So that your subjection will give us an increase of security, as well as an extension of empire. For we are masters of the sea, and you who are islanders, and insignificant islanders too, must not be allowed to escape us.’

Mel. ‘But do you not recognize another danger? For, 98 once more, since you drive us from the plea of justice and press upon us your doctrine of expediency, we must show you what is for our interest, and, if it be for yours also, may hope to convince you: Will you not be making enemies of all who are now neutrals? When they see how you are treating us they will expect you some day to turn against them; and if so, are you not strengthening the enemies whom you already have, and bringing upon you others who, if they could help, would never dream of being your enemies at all?’

Ath. ‘We do not consider our really dangerous enemies to 99 be any of the peoples inhabiting the mainland who, secure in their freedom, may defer indefinitely any measures of precaution which they take against us, but islanders who, like you, happen to be under no control, and all who may be already irritated by the necessity of submission to our empire—these are our real enemies, for they are the most reckless and most likely to bring themselves as well as us into a danger which they cannot but foresee.’

Mel. ‘Surely then, if you and your subjects will brave all 100 this risk, you to preserve your empire and they to be quit of it, how base and cowardly would it be in us, who retain our freedom, not to do and suffer anything rather than be your slaves.’

Ath. ‘Not so, if you calmly reflect: for you are not fighting 101

against equals to whom you cannot yield without disgrace, but you are taking counsel whether or no you shall resist an overwhelming force. The question is not one of honour but of prudence.'

102 *Mel.* 'But we know that the fortune of war is sometimes impartial, and not always on the side of numbers. If we yield now, all is over; but if we fight, there is yet a hope that we may stand upright.'

103 *Ath.* 'Hope is a good comforter in the hour of danger, and when men have something else to depend upon, although hurtful, she is not ruinous. But when her spendthrift nature has induced them to stake their all, they see her as she is in the moment of their fall, and not till then. While the knowledge of her might enable them to be ware of her, she never fails.¹ You are weak and a single turn of the scale might be your ruin. Do not you be thus deluded; avoid the error of which so many are guilty, who, although they might still be saved if they would take the natural means, when visible grounds of confidence forsake them have recourse to the invisible, to prophecies and oracles and the like, which ruin men by the hopes which they inspire in them.'

104 *Mel.* 'We know only too well how hard the struggle must be against your power, and against fortune, if she does not mean to be impartial. Nevertheless we do not despair of fortune; for we hope to stand as high as you in the favour of heaven, because we are righteous, and you against whom we contend are unrighteous; and we are satisfied that our deficiency in power will be compensated by the aid of our allies the Lacedaemonians; they cannot refuse to help us, if only because we are their kinsmen, and for the sake of their own

¹ Or, 'they see her as she is in the moment of their fall; and afterwards, when she is known and they might be ware of her, she leaves them nothing worth saving.'

honour. And therefore our confidence is not so utterly blind as you suppose.'

Ath. 'As for the Gods, we expect to have quite as much 105 of their favour as you : for we are not doing or claiming anything which goes beyond common opinion about divine or men's desires about human things. For of the Gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a law of their nature wherever they can rule they will. This law was not made by us, and we are not the first who have acted upon it ; we did but inherit it, and shall bequeath it to all time, and we know that you and all mankind, if you were as strong as we are, would do as we do. So much for the Gods ; we have told you why we expect to stand as high in their good opinion as you. And then as to the Lacedaemonians—when you imagine that out of very shame they will assist you, we admire the innocence of your idea, but we do not envy you the folly of it. The Lacedaemonians are exceedingly virtuous among themselves, and according to their national standard of morality. But, in respect of their dealings with others, although many things might be said, they can be described in few words—of all men whom we know they are the most notorious for identifying what is pleasant with what is honourable, and what is expedient with what is just.' . . .

Mel. 'That is the very reason why we trust them ; they will 106 look to their interest, and therefore will not be willing to betray the Melians, who are their own colonists, lest they should be distrusted by their friends in Hellas and play into the hands of their enemies.' . . .

Ath. 'Help may come from Lacedaemon to you as it has 111 come to others, and should you ever have actual experience of it, then you will know that never once have the Athenians retired from a siege through fear of a foe elsewhere. You told us that the safety of your city would be your first care, but we remark that, in this long discussion, not a word has been

uttered by you which would give a reasonable man expectation of deliverance. Your strongest grounds are hopes deferred, and what power you have is not to be compared with that which is already arrayed against you. Unless after we have withdrawn you mean to come, as even now you may, to a wise conclusion, you are showing a great want of sense. For surely you cannot dream of flying to that false sense of honour which has been the ruin of so many when danger and dishonour were staring them in the face. Many men with their eyes still open to the consequences have found the word 'honour' too much for them, and have suffered a mere name to lure them on, until it has drawn down upon them real and irretrievable calamities; through their own folly they have incurred a worse dishonour than fortune would have inflicted upon them. If you are wise you will not run this risk; you ought to see that there can be no disgrace in yielding to a great city which invites you to become her ally on reasonable terms, keeping your own land, and merely paying tribute; and that you will certainly gain no honour if, having to choose between two alternatives, safety and war, you obstinately prefer the worse. To maintain our rights against equals, to be politic with superiors, and to be moderate towards inferiors is the path of safety. Reflect once more when we have withdrawn, and say to yourselves over and over again that you are deliberating about your one and only country, which may be saved or may be destroyed by a single decision.'

112

The Athênians left the conference; the Melians, after consulting among themselves, resolved to persevere in their refusal, and made answer as follows: 'Men of Athens, our resolution is unchanged; and we will not in a moment surrender that liberty which our city, founded seven hundred years ago, still enjoys; we will trust to the good fortune which, by the favour of the Gods, has hitherto preserved us, and for human help to the Lacedaemonians, and endeavour to save

ourselves. We are ready, however, to be your friends, and the enemies neither of you nor of the Lacedaemonians, and we ask you to leave our country when you have made such a peace as may appear to be in the interest of both parties.'

Such was the answer of the Melians; the Athenians, as they 113
 quitted the conference, spoke as follows:—'Well, we must say, judging from the decision at which you have arrived, that you are the only men who deem the future to be more certain than the present, and regard things unseen as already realized in your fond anticipation, and that the more you cast yourselves upon the Lacedaemonians and fortune and hope, and trust them, the more complete will be your ruin.'

The Athenian envoys returned to the army; and the 114
 generals, when they found that the Melians would not yield, immediately commenced hostilities. . . .

So the Melians were induced to surrender at discretion. 116
 The Athenians thereupon put to death all who were of military age, and made slaves of the women and children. They then colonized the island, sending thither five hundred settlers of their own.

13. *Nicias, leader of the moderates, speaks against the policy of intervention in Sicily and the idea of attempting to conquer a new empire while engaged in a war of self-defence at home. Alcibiades cleverly answers him, and the Assembly votes with enthusiasm for an expedition on the largest possible scale. 415 B.C.*

Nicias, who had been appointed general against his will, VI 8
 thought that the people had come to a wrong conclusion, and that upon slight if specious grounds they were aspiring to the conquest of Sicily, which was no easy task. So, being desirous of diverting the Athenians from their purpose, he came forward and admonished them in the following terms:

'I know that we are assembled here to discuss the prepara- 9
 tions which are required for our expedition to Sicily, but in my

judgement it is still a question whether we ought to go thither at all ; we should not be hasty in determining a matter of so much importance, or allow ourselves to enter into an impolitic war at the instigation of foreigners. Yet to me personally war brings honour ; and I am as careless as any man about my own life : not that I think the worse of a citizen who takes a little thought about his life or his property, for I believe that the sense of a man's own interest will quicken his interest in the prosperity of the state. But I have never in my life been induced by the love of reputation to say a single word contrary to what I thought ; neither will I now : I will say simply what I believe to be best. If I told you to take care of what you have and not to throw away present advantages in order to gain an uncertain and distant good, my words would be powerless against a temper like yours. I would rather argue that this is not the time for vigorous action, and that your great aims will not be easily realized.

10 'I tell you that in going to Sicily you are leaving many enemies behind you, and seem to be bent on bringing new ones hither. You are perhaps relying upon the treaty recently made, which if you remain quiet may retain the name of a treaty ; for to a mere name the intrigues of certain persons both here and at Lacedaemon have nearly succeeded in reducing it. But if you meet with any serious reverse, your enemies will be upon you in a moment, for the agreement was originally extracted from them by the pressure of misfortune, and the discredit of it was on their side, not on ours. In the treaty itself there are many disputed points ; and, unsatisfactory as it is, to this hour several cities, and very powerful cities too, persist in rejecting it. Some of these are at open war with us already ; others may declare war at ten days' notice ; and they only remain at peace because the Lacedaemonians are indisposed to move. And in all probability, if they find our power divided (and such a division is precisely what we are

striving to create), they will eagerly join the Sicilians, whose alliance in the war they would long ago have given anything to obtain. These considerations should weigh with us. The state is far from the desired haven, and we should not run into danger and seek to gain a new empire before we have fully secured the old. . . .

‘I should say that the Sicilian cities are not dangerous to you,—certainly not in their present condition, and they would be even less so if they were to fall under the sway of the Syracusans (and this is the prospect with which the Eggestaeans would fain scare you). At present individuals might cross the sea out of friendship for the Lacedaemonians ; but if the states of Sicily were all united in one empire they would not be likely to make war upon another empire. For whatever chance they may have of overthrowing us if they unite with the Peloponnesians, there will be the same chance of their being overthrown themselves if the Peloponnesians and Athenians are ever united against them. The Hellenes in Sicily will dread us most if we never come ; in a less degree if we display our strength and speedily depart ; but if any disaster occur, they will despise us and be ready enough to join the enemies who are attacking us here. . . . If we are wise we shall not trouble ourselves about the barbarous Eggestaeans in Sicily ; the real question is how we can make ourselves secure against the designs of an insidious oligarchy.

‘We must remember also that we have only just recovered **12** in some measure from a great plague and a great war, and are beginning to make up our losses in men and money. It is our duty to expend our new resources upon ourselves at home, and not upon begging exiles who have an interest in successful lies ; . . .

‘I dare say there may be some young man here who is delighted at holding a command, and the more so because he is too young for his post ; and he, regarding only his own

interest, may recommend you to sail; he may be one who is much admired for his stud of horses, and wants to make something out of his command which will maintain him in his extravagance. But do not you give him the opportunity of indulging his own magnificent tastes at the expense of the state. Remember that men of this stamp impoverish themselves and defraud the public. An expedition to Sicily is a serious business, and not one which a mere youth can plan and carry
13 into execution off-hand. The youth of whom I am speaking has summoned to his side young men like himself, whom, not without alarm, I see sitting by him in this assembly, and I appeal against them to you elder citizens. If any of you should be placed next one of his supporters, I would not have him ashamed, or afraid of being thought a coward if he does not vote for war. Do not, like them, entertain a desperate craving for things out of your reach; you know that by provision many successes are gained, but few or none by mere greed. On behalf of our country, now on the brink of the greatest danger which she has ever known, I entreat you to hold up your hands against them. Do not interfere with the boundaries which divide us from Sicily; I mean the Ionian gulf which parts us if we sail along the coast, the Sicilian sea if we sail through the open water; these are quite satisfactory. The Sicilians have their own country; let them manage their own concerns. And let the Egestaeans in particular be informed that, having originally gone to war with the Selinuntians on their own account, they must make peace on their own account. Let us have no more allies such as ours have too often been, whom we are expected to assist when they are in misfortune, but to whom we ourselves when in need may look in vain.' . . .

15 Such were the words of Nicias. Most of the Athenians who came forward to speak were in favour of war, and reluctant to rescind the vote which had been already passed, although

a few took the other side. The most enthusiastic supporter of the expedition was Alcibiades, the son of Cleinias; he was determined to oppose Nicias, who was always his political enemy and had just now spoken of him in disparaging terms; but the desire to command was even a stronger motive with him. He was hoping that he might be the conqueror of Sicily and Carthage; and that success would repair his private fortunes, and gain him money as well as glory. He had a great position among the citizens and was devoted to horse-racing and other pleasures which outran his means. And in the end his wild courses went far to ruin the Athenian state. For the people feared the extremes to which he carried the lawlessness of his personal habits, and the far-reaching purposes which invariably animated him in all his actions. They thought that he was aiming at a tyranny and set themselves against him. And therefore, although his talents as a military commander were unrivalled, they entrusted the administration of the war to others, because they personally objected to his private habits; and so they speedily shipwrecked the state. He now came forward and spoke as follows:

‘I have a better right to command, men of Athens, than 16 another; for as Nicias has attacked me, I must begin by praising myself: and I consider that I am worthy.

‘And do not be afraid of me because I am young, but while 17 I am in the flower of my days and Nicias enjoys the reputation of success, use the services of us both. Having determined to sail, do not change your minds under the impression that Sicily is a great power. For although the Sicilian cities are populous, their inhabitants are a mixed multitude, and they readily give up old forms of government and receive new ones from without. No one really feels that he has a city of his own; and so the individual is ill provided with arms, and the country has no regular means of defence. A man looks only to what he can win from the common stock by arts of speech

or by party violence ; hoping, if he is overthrown, at any rate to carry off his prize and enjoy it elsewhere. They are a motley crew, who are never of one mind in counsel, and are incapable of any concert in action. Every man is for himself, and will readily come over to any one who makes an attractive offer ; the more readily if, as report says, they are in a state of internal discord. They boast of their hoplites, but, as has been proved to be the case in all Hellenic states, the number of them is grossly exaggerated. Hellas has been singularly mistaken about her heavy infantry ; and even in this war it was as much as she could do to collect enough of them. The obstacles then which will meet us in Sicily, judging of them from the information which I have received, are not great ; indeed, I have overrated them, for there will be many barbarians who, through fear of the Syracusans, will join us in attacking them. And at home there is nothing which, viewed rightly, need interfere with the expedition. Our forefathers had the same enemies whom we are now told that we are leaving behind us, and the Persian besides ; but their strength lay in the greatness of their navy, and by that and that alone they gained their empire. Never were the Peloponnesians more hopeless of success than at the present moment ; and let them be ever so confident, they will only invade us by land, which they can equally do whether we go to Sicily or not. But on the sea they cannot hurt us, for we shall leave behind us a navy equal to theirs.

18 'What reason can we give to ourselves for hesitation? what excuse can we make to our allies for denying them aid? We have sworn to them, and have no right to argue that they never assisted us. In seeking their alliance we did not intend that they should come and help us here, but that they should harass our enemies in Sicily, and prevent them from coming hither. Like all other imperial powers, we have acquired our dominion by our readiness to assist any one, whether Barbarian or

Hellene, who may have invoked our aid. If we are all to sit and do nothing, or to draw distinctions of race when our help is requested, we shall add little to our empire, and run a great risk of losing it altogether. For mankind do not wait the attack of a superior power, they anticipate it. We cannot cut down an empire as we might a household; but having once gained our present position, we must, while keeping a firm hold upon some, contrive occasion against others; for if we are not rulers we shall be subjects. You cannot afford to regard inaction in the same light as others might, unless you impose a corresponding restriction on your practice. Convinced then that we shall be most likely to increase our power here if we attack our enemies there, let us sail. We shall humble the pride of the Peloponnesians when they see that, scorning the delights of repose, we have attacked Sicily. By the help of our acquisitions there, we shall probably become masters of all Hellas; at any rate we shall injure the Syracusans, and at the same time benefit ourselves and our allies. Whether we succeed and remain, or depart, in either case our navy will ensure our safety; for at sea we shall be more than a match for all Sicily. Nicias must not divert you from your purpose by preaching indolence,¹ and by trying to set the young against the old; rather in your accustomed order, old and young taking counsel together, after the manner of your fathers who raised Athens to this height of greatness, strive to rise yet higher. Consider that youth and age have no power unless united; but that the shallower and the more exact and the middle sort of judgement, when duly attempered, are likely to be most efficient. The state, if at rest, like everything else will wear herself out by internal friction. Every pursuit which requires skill will tend to decay, whereas by conflict the city will always be gaining fresh experience and learning to defend herself, not in theory, but in practice. My opinion in short is,

¹ i. e. non-intervention.

that a state used to activity will quickly be ruined by the change to inaction ; and that they of all men enjoy the greatest security who are truest to themselves and their institutions even when they are not the best.'

14. *Alcibiades, exiled from Athens by his political enemies, flies to the Lacedaemonians and urges them to renew the war by sending expeditions both to Sicily and to Attica. He denounces the incompetence of the democracy of Athens and reveals the ambitions of the war-party.* 415 B.C.

VI 89 'I must endeavour first of all to remove a prejudice against myself, lest through suspicion of me you should turn a deaf ear to considerations of public interest. My ancestors in consequence of some misunderstanding renounced the office of Lacedaemonian proxenus ; I myself resumed it, and did you many good offices, especially after your misfortune at Pylos. My anxiety to serve you never ceased, but when you were making peace with Athens you negotiated through my enemies, thereby conferring power on them, and bringing dishonour upon me. . . . Or, again, if any one thought the worse of me because I was inclined to the people, let him acknowledge that here too there is no real ground of offence. Any power adverse to despotism is called democracy, and my family have always retained the leadership of the people in their hands because we have been the persistent enemies of tyrants. Living too under a popular government, how could we avoid in a great degree conforming to circumstances ? However, we did our best to observe political moderation amid the prevailing licence. But there were demagogues, as there always have been, who led the people into evil ways, and it was they who drove me out. Whereas we were the leaders of the state as a whole, and not of a part only ; it was our view that all ought to combine in maintaining that form of government which had been inherited by us, and under which the city

enjoyed the greatest freedom and glory. Of course, like all sensible men, we knew only too well what democracy is, and I better than any one, who have so good a reason for abusing it. The follies of democracy are universally admitted, and there is nothing new to be said about them.¹ But we could not venture to change our form of government when an enemy like yourselves was so near to us.

‘Such is the truth about the calumnies under which I labour. 90
And now I will speak to you of the matter which you have in hand, and about which I, in so far as I have better information, am bound to instruct you. We sailed to Sicily hoping in the first place to conquer the Sicilian cities; then to proceed against the Hellenes of Italy; and lastly, to make an attempt on the Carthaginian dominions, and on Carthage itself. If all or most of these enterprises succeeded, we meant finally to attack Peloponnesus, bringing with us the whole Hellenic power which we had gained abroad, besides many barbarians whom we intended to hire—Iberians and the neighbouring tribes, esteemed to be the most warlike barbarians that now are. Of the timber which Italy supplies in such abundance we meant to build numerous additional triremes, and with them to blockade Peloponnesus. At the same time making inroads by land with our infantry, we should have stormed some of your cities and invested others. Thus we hoped to crush you easily, and to rule over the Hellenic world. For the better accomplishment of our various aims our newly-acquired territory would supply money and provisions enough, apart from the revenue which we receive in Hellas.

‘You have heard the objects of our expedition from him 91
who knows them best; the generals who remain will persevere and carry them out if they can. And now let me prove to you that if you do not come to the rescue Sicily will be lost. . . .

¹ More exactly, ‘there is nothing new to be said about a confessed absurdity.’

The Syracusans alone, whose whole forces have been already defeated, and who cannot move freely at sea, will be unable to withstand the power which the Athenians already have on the spot. And Syracuse once taken, the whole of Sicily is in their hands; the subjugation of Italy will follow; and the danger which, as I was saying, threatens you from that quarter, will speedily overwhelm you. . . . No time should be lost. You must send to Sicily a force of hoplites who will themselves handle the oars and will take the field immediately on landing. A Spartan commander I conceive to be even more indispensable than an army; his duty will be to organize the troops which are already enlisted, and to press the unwilling into the service. Here too in Hellas you should make open war. The Syracusans, seeing that you have not forgotten them, will then persevere in their resistance, while the Athenians will have greater difficulty in reinforcing their army. You ought also to fortify Decelea in Attica; the Athenians are always in particular dread of this; to them it seems to be the only peril of which they have not faced the worst in the course of the war. . . . I will sum up briefly the chief, though by no means all the advantages which you will gain, and the disadvantages which you will inflict, by the fortification of Decelea. The whole stock of the country will fall into your hands. The slaves will come over to you of their own accord; what there is besides will be seized by you. The Athenians will at once be deprived of the revenues which they obtain from the silver mines of Laurium, and of all the profits which they make by the land or by the law courts: above all, the customary tribute will cease to flow in; for their allies, when they see that you are now carrying on the war in earnest, will not mind them.

92 How far these plans are executed, and with how much speed and energy, Lacedaemonians, depends on you; for I am confident that they are practicable, and I am not likely to be mistaken.

‘You ought not in fairness to think the worse of me because, having been once distinguished as a lover of my country, I now cast in my lot with her worst foes and attack her with all my might ; or suspect that I speak only with the eagerness of an exile. An exile I am indeed ; I have lost an ungrateful country, but I have not lost the power of doing you service, if you will listen to me. The true enemies of my country are not those who, like you, have injured her in open war, but those who have compelled her friends to become her enemies. I love Athens, not in so far as I am wronged by her, but in so far as I once enjoyed the privileges of a citizen. The country which I am attacking is no longer mine, but a lost country which I am seeking to regain. He is the true patriot, not who, when unjustly exiled, abstains from attacking his country, but who in the warmth of his affection seeks to recover her without regard to the means. I desire therefore that you, Lacedaemonians, will use me without scruple in any service however difficult or dangerous, remembering that, according to the familiar saying, “the more harm I did you as an enemy, the more good can I do you as a friend”. For I know the secrets of the Athenians, while I could only guess at yours.’

15. *The final catastrophe. The end of the Sicilian Expedition a death-blow to the Athenian Empire.* 413 B.C.

On the third day after the sea-fight, when Nicias and Demosthenes thought that their preparations were complete, the army began to move. They were in a dreadful condition, not only was there the great fact that they had lost their whole fleet, and instead of their expected triumph had brought the utmost peril upon Athens as well as upon themselves, but also the sights which presented themselves as they quitted the camp were painful to every eye and mind. The dead were unburied, and when any one saw the body of a friend lying on the ground he was smitten with sorrow and dread, while the

sick or wounded who still survived but had to be left were even a greater trial to the living, and more to be pitied than those who were gone. Their prayers and lamentations drove their companions to distraction; they would beg that they might be taken with them, and call by name any friend or relation whom they saw passing; they would hang upon their departing comrades and follow as far as they could, and, when their limbs and strength failed them, and they dropped behind, many were the imprecations and cries which they uttered. So that the whole army was in tears, and such was their despair that they could hardly make up their minds to stir, although they were leaving an enemy's country, having suffered calamities too great for tears already, and dreading miseries yet greater in the unknown future. There was also a general feeling of shame and self-reproach,—indeed they seemed, not like an army, but like the fugitive population of a city captured after a siege; and of a great city too. For the whole multitude who were marching together numbered not less than forty thousand. Each of them took with him anything he could carry which was likely to be of use. Even the heavy-armed and cavalry, contrary to their practice when under arms, conveyed about their persons their own food, some because they had no attendants, others because they could not trust them; for they had long been deserting, and most of them had gone off all at once. Nor was the food which they carried sufficient; for the supplies of the camp had failed. Their disgrace and the universality of the misery, although there might be some consolation in the very community of suffering, were nevertheless at that moment hard to bear, especially when they remembered from what pride and splendour they had fallen into their present low estate. Never had an Hellenic army experienced such a reverse. They had come intending to enslave others, and they were going away in fear that they would be themselves enslaved. . . .

Nicias, seeing the army disheartened at their terrible fall, ⁷⁶ went along the ranks and encouraged and consoled them as well as he could. In his fervour he raised his voice as he passed from one to another and spoke louder and louder, desiring that the benefit of his words might reach as far as possible.

‘Even now, Athenians and allies, we must hope: men have ⁷⁷ been delivered out of worse straits than these. . . . I too am as weak as any of you; for I am quite prostrated by my disease, as you see. And although there was a time when I might have been thought equal to the best of you in the happiness of my private and public life, I am now in as great danger, and as much at the mercy of fortune, as the meanest. Yet my days have been passed in the performance of many a religious duty, and of many a just and blameless action. Therefore my hope of the future is still courageous, and our calamities do not appal me as they might. Who knows that they may not be lightened? For our enemies have had their full share of success, and if we were under the jealousy of any God when our fleet started, by this time we have been punished enough. Others ere now have attacked their neighbours; they have done as men will do, and suffered what men can bear. We may therefore begin to hope that the Gods will be more merciful to us; for we now invite their pity rather than their jealousy. And look at your own well-armed ranks; see how many brave soldiers you are, marching in solid array, and do not be dismayed; bear in mind that wherever you plant yourselves you are a city already, and that no city in Sicily will find it easy to resist your attack, or can dislodge you if you choose to settle. Provide for the safety and good order of your own march, and remember every one of you that on whatever spot a man is compelled to fight, there if he conquer he may find a native land and a fortress. We must press forward day and night, for our supplies are but scanty. The Sicels through fear of the Syracusans still adhere to us, and if

we can only reach any part of their territory we shall be among friends, and you may consider yourselves secure. We have sent to them, and they have been told to meet us and bring food. In a word, soldiers, let me tell you that you must be brave; there is no place near to which a coward can fly. And if you now escape your enemies, those of you who are not Athenians will see once more the home for which they long, while you Athenians will again rear aloft the fallen greatness of Athens. For men, and not walls or ships in which are no men, constitute a state.' . . .

81 When daylight broke and the Syracusans and their allies saw
 5th Day that the Athenians had departed, most of them thought that Gylippus had let them go on purpose, and were very angry with him. They easily found the line of their retreat, and quickly following, came up with them about the time of the
 6th Day midday meal. . . . The division of Nicias was now as much as six miles in advance, for he marched faster, thinking that their safety depended at such a time, not in remaining and fighting, if they could avoid it, but in retreating as quickly as they could, and resisting only when they were positively compelled. Demosthenes, on the other hand, who had been more incessantly harassed throughout the retreat, because marching last he was first attacked by the enemy, now, when he saw the Syracusans pursuing him, instead of pressing onward, ranged his army in order of battle. Thus lingering he was surrounded, and he and the Athenians under his command were in the greatest confusion. For they were crushed into a walled enclosure, having a road on both sides and planted thickly with olive-trees, and missiles were hurled at them from all points. The Syracusans naturally preferred this mode of attack to a regular engagement. For to risk themselves against desperate men would have been only playing into the hands of the Athenians. . . .

And so when they had gone on all day assailing them with 82 missiles from every quarter, and saw that they were quite worn out with their wounds and all their other sufferings, Gylippus and the Syracusans made a proclamation, first of all to the islanders, that any of them who pleased might come over to them and have their freedom. But only a few cities accepted the offer. At length an agreement was made for the entire force under Demosthenes. Their arms were to be surrendered, but no one was to suffer death, either from violence or from imprisonment, or from want of the bare means of life. So they all surrendered, being in number six thousand, and gave up what money they had. This they threw into the hollows of shields and filled four. The captives were at once taken to the city. On the same day Nicias and his division reached the river Erineus, which he crossed, and halted his army on a rising ground.

On the following day he was overtaken by the Syracusans, who 83 told him that Demosthenes had surrendered, and bade him do 7th Day the same. He, not believing them, procured a truce while he sent a horseman to go and see. Upon the return of the horseman bringing assurance of the fact, he sent a herald to Gylippus and the Syracusans, saying that he would agree, on behalf of the Athenian state, to pay the expenses which the Syracusans had incurred in the war, on condition that they should let his army go; until the money was paid he would give Athenian citizens as hostages, a man for a talent. Gylippus and the Syracusans would not accept these proposals, but attacked and surrounded this division of the army as they had the other, and hurled missiles at them from every side until the evening. They too were grievously in want of food and necessaries. Nevertheless they meant to wait for the dead of the night and then to proceed. They were just resuming their arms, when the Syracusans discovered them and raised the Paean. The Athenians, perceiving that they were detected,

laid down their arms again, with the exception of about three hundred men who broke through the enemy's guard, and made their escape in the darkness as best they could.

84
8th Day When the day dawned Nicias led forward his army, and the Syracusans and the allies again assailed them on every side, hurling javelins and other missiles at them. The Athenians hurried on to the river Assinarus. They hoped to gain a little relief if they forded the river, for the mass of horsemen and other troops overwhelmed and crushed them: and they were worn out by fatigue and thirst. But no sooner did they reach the water than they lost all order and rushed in; every man was trying to cross first, and, the enemy pressing upon them at the same time, the passage of the river became hopeless. Being compelled to keep close together they fell one upon another, and trampled each other underfoot; some at once perished, pierced by their own spears; others got entangled in the baggage and were carried down the stream. The Syracusans stood upon the farther bank of the river, which was steep, and hurled missiles from above on the Athenians, who were huddled together in the deep bed of the stream and for the most part were drinking greedily. The Peloponnesians came down the bank and slaughtered them, falling chiefly upon those who were in the river. Whereupon the water at once became foul, but was drunk all the same, although muddy and dyed with blood, and the crowd fought for it.

85 At last, when the dead bodies were lying in heaps upon one another in the water and the army was utterly undone, some perishing in the river, and any who escaped being cut off by the cavalry, Nicias surrendered to Gylippus, in whom he had more confidence than in the Syracusans. He entreated him and the Lacedaemonians to do what they pleased with himself, but not to go on killing the men. So Gylippus gave the word to make prisoners. Thereupon the survivors, not including, however, a large number whom the soldiers concealed, were

brought in alive. As for the three hundred who had broken through the guard in the night, the Syracusans sent in pursuit and seized them. The total of the public prisoners when collected was not great; for many were appropriated by the soldiers, and the whole of Sicily was full of them, they not having capitulated like the troops under Demosthenes. A large number also perished; the slaughter at the river being very great, quite as great as any which took place in the Sicilian war; and not a few had fallen in the frequent attacks which were made upon the Athenians during their march. Still many escaped, some at the time, others ran away after an interval of slavery, and all these found refuge at Catana.

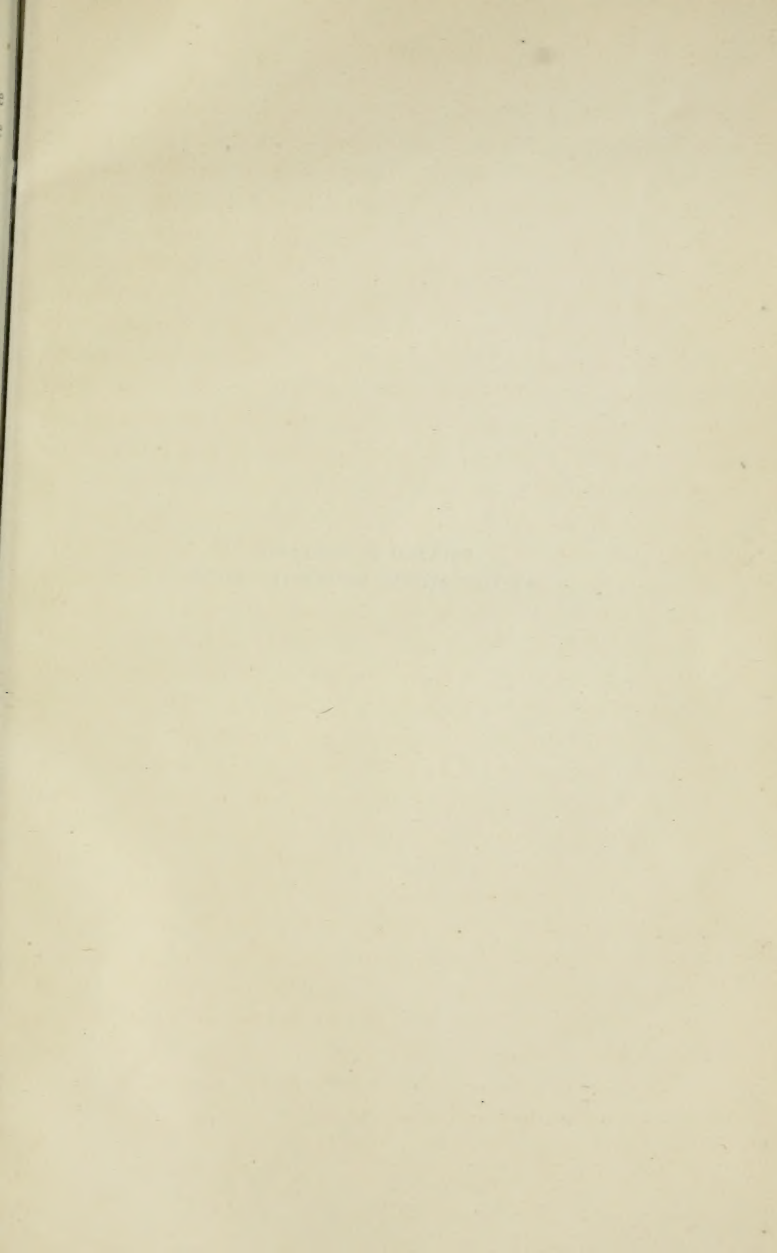
The Syracusans and their allies collected their forces and 86 returned with the spoil, and as many prisoners as they could take with them, into the city. The captive Athenians and allies they deposited in the quarries, which they thought would be the safest place of confinement. Nicias and Demosthenes they put to the sword, although against the will of Gylippus. For Gylippus thought that to carry home with him to Lacedaemon the generals of the enemy, over and above all his other successes, would be a brilliant triumph. One of them, Demosthenes, happened to be the greatest foe, and the other the greatest friend of the Lacedaemonians, both in the same matter of Pylos and Sphacteria. For Nicias had taken up their cause, and had persuaded the Athenians to make the peace which set at liberty the prisoners taken in the island. The Lacedaemonians were grateful to him for the service, and this was the main reason why he trusted Gylippus and surrendered himself to him. But certain Syracusans, who had been in communication with him, were afraid (such was the report) that on some suspicion of their guilt he might be put to the torture and bring trouble on them in the hour of their prosperity. Others, and especially the Corinthians, feared that, being rich, he might by bribery escape and do them

further mischief. So the Syracusans gained the consent of the allies and had him executed. For these or the like reasons he suffered death. No one of the Hellenes in my time was less deserving of so miserable an end ; for he lived in the practice of every virtue.

87 Those who were imprisoned in the quarries were at the beginning of their captivity harshly treated by the Syracusans. There were great numbers of them, and they were crowded in a deep and narrow place. At first the sun by day was still scorching and suffocating, for they had no roof over their heads, while the autumn nights were cold, and the extremes of temperature engendered violent disorders. Being cramped for room they had to do everything on the same spot. The corpses of those who died from their wounds, exposure to heat and cold, and the like, lay heaped one upon another. The smells were intolerable ; and they were at the same time afflicted by hunger and thirst. During eight months they were allowed only about half a pint of water and a pint of food a day. Every kind of misery which could befall man in such a place befell them. This was the condition of all the captives for about ten weeks. At length the Syracusans sold them, with the exception of the Athenians and of any Sicilian or Italian Greeks who had sided with them in the war. The whole number of the public prisoners is not accurately known, but they were not less than seven thousand.

Of all the Hellenic actions which took place in this war, or indeed, as I think, of all Hellenic actions which are on record, this was the greatest—the most glorious to the victors, the most ruinous to the vanquished ; for they were utterly and at all points defeated, and their sufferings were prodigious. Fleet and army perished from the face of the earth ; nothing was saved, and of the many who went forth few returned home.

Thus ended the Sicilian expedition.



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